



OCTOBER 2003 Rs. 15/-

# CHANDAMAMA

In this issue

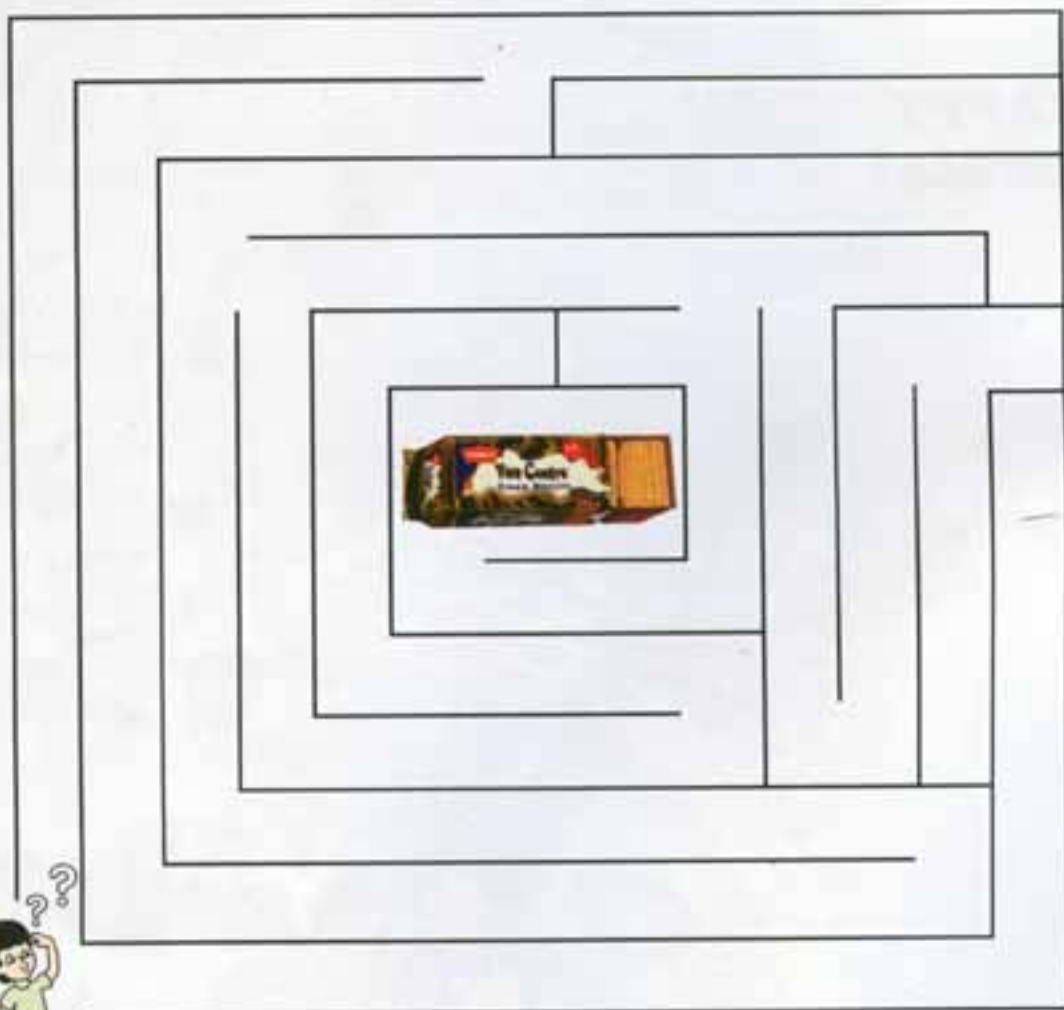
## KALEIDOSCOPE

WRITINGS OF CHILDREN UNDER  
14 YEARS OF AGE

**HAPPY  
DIWALI!**

**DIWALI  
SPARKLES**  
Page 6





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**CHILDREN'S SPECIAL ISSUE!**

**A SPARKLER**  
**TO LIGHT UP**  
**YOUR DIWALI!**





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of Ruskin Bond)



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For USA & Canada 12 issues by air mail English \$ 30

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## Fast Food: Faster steps towards doom

Isn't it an irony that while so many devices are at our disposal to make our life easy and to allow us more time for ourselves, we are more and more in a hurry? We have telephones, mobile phones, fax, and e-mail facilities to enable us to do things speedily, so that we can enjoy more leisure.

This situation is glaringly evident in our fast food culture — a culture designed to save us time. Providence alone knows if we are saving time only to shorten our life-span. It is now asserted by studies that the fast food — or junk food as it is often rightly called — is not only costly, but it costs our health. The West from which we have imported this culture is already facing an unexpected problem. Michelle Mascarenhas, Food and Society Policy Fellow, San Francisco, poses this question: "The problem of obesity in the USA is known throughout the world. But, as the American diet is being exported to India in the form of increased consumption of meat, western fast food, and brand name sodas, is India incubating a new public health crisis? Will India be forced to choose between eradicating hunger and treating those who are overweight?" He also observes: "The rich diversity of cultural traditions and agricultural regions in India has given birth to many healthy foods prepared from locally grown ingredients." Children will be the immediate victims of this obesity phenomenon. Parents in India have to take note of the warning before it becomes yet another problem for our nation.

*Founded by*  
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### Words of Wisdom

### Learn to wait

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour and to wait.

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  
A Psalm of Life St. 9



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# Diwali Sparkles!

**Happy Diwali! Are you ready to set off crackers now? While you watch that rocket swish off into the night sky, or the fountain of flowers throw an ethereal light over everything around, mull on these crackling facts!**



Pyrotechnics, the art of making and using fireworks, comes from the Greek words, 'puro' (fire) and 'tekhne' (art).

Firecrackers were known to the Chinese and Indians from ancient times. Marco Polo, the great Italian traveller, has left accounts of the marvellous fireworks displays he had seen during Chinese festivals.

The Chinese celebrate their New Year with fireworks displays. The Chinese custom of letting off firecrackers on the New Year is at least 2,000 years old. The first crackers were made of bamboo sticks filled with gunpowder (did you know that the Chinese invented gunpowder?) Firecrackers came to be called *baozhang* (exploding sticks), a name still used by some Chinese communities. It is believed that the first man to use gunpowder in crackers was a man of science called Ma Jun who is said to have lived 1,700 years ago.

Fireworks were introduced to Europe only in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.



## An English Diwali?



Every November 5, England vibrates with the sound of firecrackers going off. Children set fire to stuffed dolls called 'Guys' and burst crackers. Guess why? It's Guy Fawkes Day on November 5. In 1605, a man called Guy Fawkes, along with some friends, hatched a plot to kill King James I of England, and blow up the Parliament with gunpowder. The D-day was to be November 5. The men rented a cellar beneath the palace and hid at least 20 barrels of gunpowder there. But the plot was discovered just in time.

Guy Fawkes and his men were caught and hanged. And even today England celebrates the thwarting of Guy's evil plans.





# The Hidden Treasure

**D**ark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of peals of thunder were heard the howls of jackals and eerie laughter of ghosts.

But King Vikram did not swerve. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. As soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke, "O King, I do not know if it is for hitting upon some hidden treasure that you are performing a certain rite. But you ought to know that there are instances of people turning their back to the call of such treasures. Let me narrate an incident to you. Pay attention to it. That ought to bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: In days gone by, there lived a poor man in a village bordering a forest. He had three grown-up daughters. The poor man and his wife were much worried because they knew that they would need a lot of money for performing the marriage of the girls and they hardly had any.

"You had once been a soldier in the king's army. It was while fighting for the king that you were wounded and you had to retire from army service. If you go and explain your difficulties to the king, he will certainly help you," the man's wife reminded him.

The man found the advice quite sensible. He knew the king to be generous and kind. He proceeded to the capital of the kingdom, on the other side of the forest.

As a former soldier, it was not difficult for him to get an audience with the king. He requested for financial support from the king. But the king said, "I'd have surely







helped you in the normal circumstances. But we are quite bothered about the flood that has devastated fifty villages in the northern part of the kingdom. It was only yesterday that I announced that no alms, donations, or contributions be given to anybody until the marooned villagers had been completely resettled. I cannot act against my own policy! My treasury does not have enough wealth to meet this exigency.”

“I understand your problem, my lord,” said the ex-soldier.

He left the capital for his village. It was late in the day and he was tired. Although he had planned to cross the forest before it was dark, he could not do so. What is more, he lost his way in the forest. Instead of taking to the usual shortcut, he wandered deeper and deeper.

A strong wind began blowing and there was a drizzle. He looked here and there for shelter. At the foot of a hillock he saw a mansion in ruins.

He entered it. A jackal and a wild-cat, who were inside, ran away at his intrusion. Bats fluttered overhead and he could even hear a sound like the hiss of a snake.

A string of lightning dazzled the interior of the room. At once he saw something like a skeleton approaching him. There was no question of his resting in the building any longer. He made a dash towards the door.

But another flash of lightning showed a bizarre figure guarding the door against his exit. He stopped. He lost all hope of life, but decided to be brave.

“Don’t fret. Though I’m a ghost, I mean no harm to you,” said the figure.

“Thanks, I mean no harm to you either. Let me go away,” said the ex-soldier.

The ghost laughed. “You cannot harm me even if you wish to. But you can do me good! In fact, I can also do you plenty of good. Do you need money?” asked the ghost.

“Yes!” replied the man eagerly.

“How much?”

“Well, if I could get about thirty gold coins, I can perform my daughters’ marriages smoothly.”

The ghost laughed and laughed.

“Why are you laughing?” asked the man.

“You’re too humble. I will put a caveful of wealth at your disposal that might amount to as many as three million gold coins! In exchange you’ve to do something which anybody can do. You have to perform my funeral rites at the holy city of Gaya,” said the ghost.

The ghost also told him about the origin of the wealth. Two generations ago there lived a terrible bandit-chief in the forest. He commanded a small but well-trained gang and plundered travelling merchants and raided the houses of the wealthy in distant villages and towns. He promised the members of his gang an equal share and collected the booty in a cave. But one day they had an encounter with the army and all but the leader were killed.

The bandit-chief guarded his wealth hidden in the cave, but could not go out of the forest because of the fear of being captured. One day he was killed by a tiger, but his ghost continued to guard the treasure.

Years later a traveller was requested by the ghost to perform certain rites at Gaya for his release from the sad and painful state. The traveller did it and returned to the forest. On the eve of his release from his ghostly existence,



the bandit-chief's ghost showed the treasure to the traveller.

The traveller was charmed. He built a house close to the cave and guarded the wealth. He died in course of time, but continued to guard the wealth. It was the traveller's ghost which was now talking to the ex-soldier.

"I'll be happy to do the needful at Gaya. Tell me, where's the treasure?" the ex-soldier asked, betraying great eagerness.

"I'd rather like you to finish the work at Gaya first. As soon as you return, I'll lead you to the treasure," said the ghost.

"All right," said the man. When the rain stopped, the ghost showed him the way out of the forest. The man forthwith proceeded to Gaya, performed the rites and was back in the forest in a week's time.

It was evening. The ex-soldier met the ghost on the threshold of the ruined house. "I'm most grateful to you," said the ghost. "I was only waiting for you. Come, I'll show you the treasure and then go away, free from the curse of this ghostly existence."

The man followed the ghost. Behind the house was a cave, its mouth sealed by a huge stone and shrubs and creepers.

"In this cave lies the hidden treasure. I'll presently open it for you."

"Please wait," said the man. "I thank you very much. You need not open it for me," the man told the ghost and turned back and headed straight towards the capital-city.

"My lord, how much money do you need for resettling those people hit by the flood?" he asked the king in confidence.

The king was amused at such a question from one who was seeking alms only the other day. Nevertheless, he said, "Well, say, two million gold coins!"

"I can give you three million worth of treasure if you come with me," said the man.

The king was surprised. At first he thought that the man had gone mad. But there was a sincerity in the man's tone and he just could not dismiss him. He followed him into the forest, accompanied by his minister, army general, and bodyguards.

The cave was opened and the huge treasure discovered. The treasure was carried to the palace and arrangements were made for reconstructing the villages destroyed by the flood.

"You deserve a portion of the wealth," said the king. "Take it!"

"No, my lord, you must spend the entire amount for the people's welfare. How can I take a portion of what is my gift to you?" protested the former soldier.

"Then you must take money from my own treasury!" said the king. He gave fifty thousand gold coins to the man and heaped honours on him.

The vampire paused and demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, I have several doubts. Why should the two fellows who guarded the treasure one after the other when alive, without spending it, lose interest in it when they became ghosts? Why did the ex-soldier refuse to take a look at the treasure and why did he not possess it himself? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum though you may know the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders!"



King Vikram had ready answers: “Men who guard such treasure always nourish the hope that one day they would spend it the way they like. Once dead, they realise that the wealth is of no use to their ghostly existence. It is a curse to remain a ghost without being reborn or finding salvation. Hence, they long for freedom through the funeral rites.

“The ex-soldier was a man of sound common sense. He remembered how the ghost had declined to show him the treasure before he had performed the rites at Gaya. It was because the ghost feared that the man might get charmed with the wealth and continue to live there without going to Gaya at all! The ex-soldier realised that the wealth gathered through murder, arson

and making hundreds of people unhappy bears a curse upon it.

“He refused to look at it alone because he saw that the traveller, after seeing it, had been so very charmed that he never left it and was stuck to it even after death. He did not wish something similar to happen to him — to be possessed by the wealth instead of being able to possess it!

“The proper use of such wealth should be to make the needy happy with it. That is why he wanted it to be used for the people in distress and declined to have any share in it.”

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his reply than the Vetala, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



One can tell the sex of a horse from its teeth. Most horses have 40 teeth, while mares have 36. The proverb says, 'Don't look a gift horse in the mouth' (to count its teeth, one supposes)!



All roles in Shakespeare's plays were originally enacted by men and boys. In England at that time, women were not expected to appear on stage.

At the zenith of its power, in 400 BC, the Greek city of Sparta had 25,000 citizens and 500,000 slaves.







Send your questions to :  
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**Q Are the Puranic legends based on truth?**  
**- Lalit Purani, Ahmedabad**

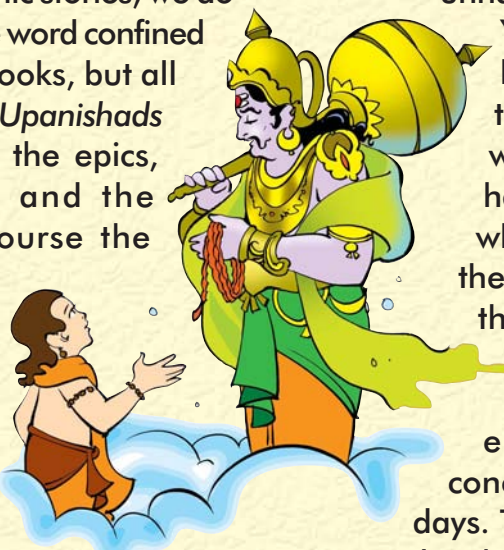
**A** Much depends on what you mean by truth and what you mean by Puranic. The *Puranas* are a bunch of ancient works written over several centuries, beginning with Vyasa's *Bhagavatam*. There are some 36 important Puranas followed by a large number of Upapuranas or subsidiary Puranas. They abound in legends regarding gods, sages, great kings and other important characters. But when we speak of Puranic stories, we do not keep the meaning of the word confined to the stories from these books, but all the stories appearing in the *Upanishads* (older than the Puranas), the epics, namely the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and, of course the Puranas.

Coming to the concept of truth, there are several planes of truth: factual truth, social and moral truth, psychological and spiritual truth. Often the Puranic legends combine in them truths of several planes. Let us take, for example, the legend of Nachiketa. Probably you know the story. His father, while performing a Yajna, was giving away whatever he possessed. The young Nachiketa asked him, "To whom do you give me?" The father, as if annoyed, said, "To Yama." The boy

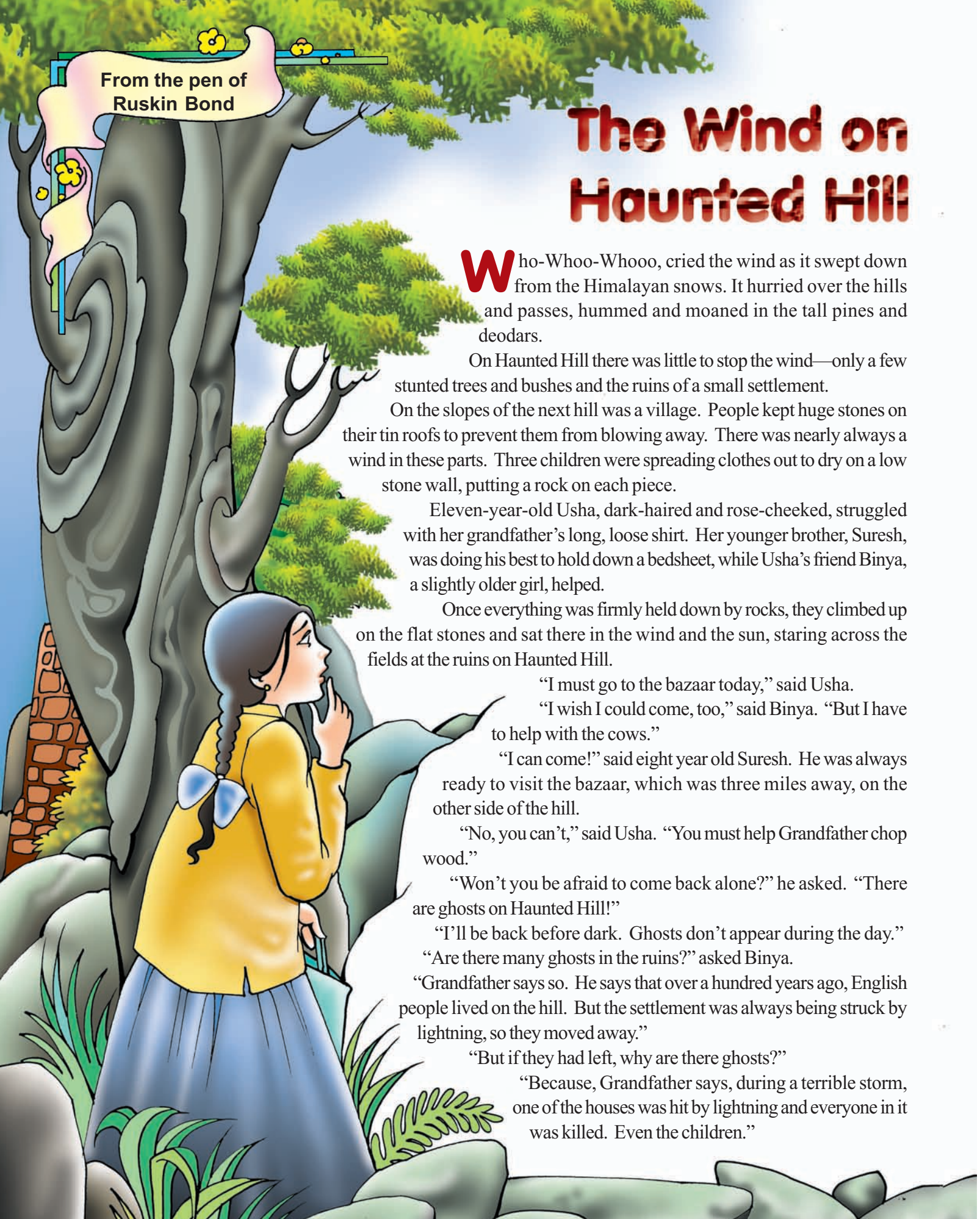
forthwith proceeded to the abode of Yama, who is the god of Death, and stood three days waiting for the god who was away. At last the god arrived and offered him three boons. For the last boon Nachiketa wished to know all about death - what happens to one after the body falls away, so on and so forth. The god, at first reluctant to reveal the mystery, ultimately granted the boy the knowledge he sought.

There is every reason to believe that Nachiketa was a real character. There was nothing unnatural in his father performing a Yajna and giving away whatever he possessed. These could be truths at the factual plane. But when he told Nachiketa that he had given him away to Yama, what he meant was, he assigned the boy the task of meditating on the mystery of death. The boy waiting for Yama for three days meant he received his enlightenment after a deep concentration and quest for three days. This is how the physical truths are mixed with spiritual or symbolic truths in several important Puranic legends.

It is not easy to appreciate the spirit of a remote past, the values that prevailed then, and the style in which the sages recorded their experiences. We have to understand them in their right perspective. That is not easy. Hence there is the tendency to dismiss them as mere tales.





A colorful illustration of a young girl with dark hair in a braid, wearing a yellow shirt and a blue skirt, looking up at a large, gnarled tree. The tree has a thick trunk and green foliage. In the background, there are more trees and a small stone wall. The sky is blue with some clouds.

From the pen of  
Ruskin Bond

# The Wind on Haunted Hill

**W**ho-Whoo-Whooo, cried the wind as it swept down from the Himalayan snows. It hurried over the hills and passes, hummed and moaned in the tall pines and deodars.

On Haunted Hill there was little to stop the wind—only a few stunted trees and bushes and the ruins of a small settlement.

On the slopes of the next hill was a village. People kept huge stones on their tin roofs to prevent them from blowing away. There was nearly always a wind in these parts. Three children were spreading clothes out to dry on a low stone wall, putting a rock on each piece.

Eleven-year-old Usha, dark-haired and rose-cheeked, struggled with her grandfather's long, loose shirt. Her younger brother, Suresh, was doing his best to hold down a bedsheet, while Usha's friend Binya, a slightly older girl, helped.

Once everything was firmly held down by rocks, they climbed up on the flat stones and sat there in the wind and the sun, staring across the fields at the ruins on Haunted Hill.

"I must go to the bazaar today," said Usha.

"I wish I could come, too," said Binya. "But I have to help with the cows."

"I can come!" said eight year old Suresh. He was always ready to visit the bazaar, which was three miles away, on the other side of the hill.

"No, you can't," said Usha. "You must help Grandfather chop wood."

"Won't you be afraid to come back alone?" he asked. "There are ghosts on Haunted Hill!"

"I'll be back before dark. Ghosts don't appear during the day."

"Are there many ghosts in the ruins?" asked Binya.

"Grandfather says so. He says that over a hundred years ago, English people lived on the hill. But the settlement was always being struck by lightning, so they moved away."

"But if they had left, why are there ghosts?"

"Because, Grandfather says, during a terrible storm, one of the houses was hit by lightning and everyone in it was killed. Even the children."



“Were there many children?”

“Two. A brother and sister. Grandfather has seen them playing there in the moonlight.”

“Wasn’t he frightened?”

“No. Old people don’t mind ghosts.”

Usha set out for the bazaar at two in the afternoon. It was about an hour’s walk. The path went through yellow fields of flowering mustard, then along the saddle of the hill, and up, straight through the ruins. Usha had often gone that way to shop at the bazaar or to see her aunt who lived in town.

Wild flowers bloomed on the crumbling walls of the ruins, and a wild plum tree grew straight out of the floor of what had once been a hall. It was covered with soft, white blossoms. Lizards scuttled over the stones, while a whistling thrush, its deep purple plumage glistening in the sunshine, sat on an empty window and sang its heart out.

Usha sang, too, as she skipped lightly along the path, which dipped steeply down to the valley and the little town with its straggling bazaar.

She took her time in the bazaar and bought spices, sugar and matches. With two rupees that she had saved, she chose a necklace of amber-coloured beads for herself and some marbles for Suresh. Then, she had her mother’s slippers repaired at a cobbler’s shop.

Finally, Usha went to visit Aunt Lakshmi in her flat above the shops. They were talking and drinking cups of hot, sweet tea when Usha noticed that dark clouds had gathered over the mountains. She quickly picked up her things, said good-bye to her aunt, and set off for the village.

Strangely, the wind had dropped. The trees were still, the crickets silent. The crows flew round in circles, then settled in an oak tree.

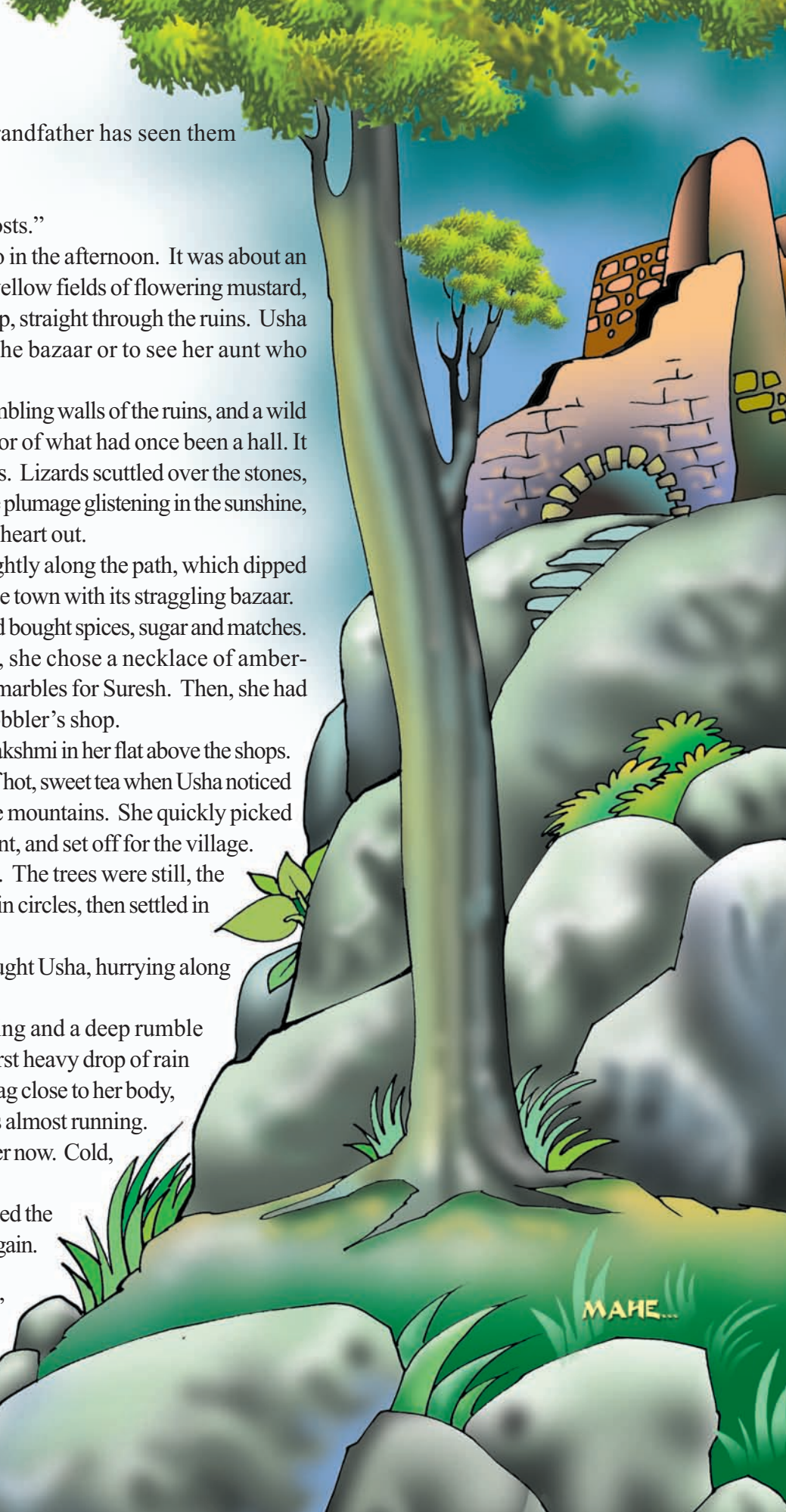
I must get home before dark, thought Usha, hurrying along the path.

But already the sky was darkening and a deep rumble echoed over the hills. Usha felt the first heavy drop of rain hit her cheek. Holding the shopping bag close to her body, she quickened her pace until she was almost running. The raindrops were coming down faster now. Cold, stinging pellets of rain.

A flash of lightning sharply outlined the ruins on the hill, and then all was dark again. Night had fallen.

‘I’ll have to take shelter in the ruins,’ she thought and began to run.

Suddenly the wind sprang up again, but Usha did not have to



fight it. It was behind her now, helping her along, up the steep path and onto the bow of the hill.

There was another flash of lightning, followed by a peal of thunder. The ruins loomed up before her, grim and forbidding.

Usha remembered part of an old roof that would give some shelter. It would be better than trying to go on. In the dark, in the howling wind, she might stray off the path and fall over the edge of the cliff.

Who-whoo-whooo, howled the wind. Usha saw the wild plum tree swaying, its foliage thrashing against the ground.

She found her way into the ruins, helped by the constant flicker of lightning. Usha placed her hands flat against a stone wall and moved sideways, hoping to reach the sheltered corner. Suddenly, her hand touched something soft and furry. She gave a startled cry as something leapt away in the darkness.

Instantly Usha realised that it was only the cat that lived in the ruins. For a moment she had been frightened, but now she moved quickly along the hall until she heard the rain drumming on the remnant of a tin roof. Crouched in the corner, she found some shelter. But the tin sheets screeched and groaned as if they would sail away at any moment.

Usha remembered that across this empty room stood an old fireplace. Perhaps it would be drier there under the blocked-up chimney, but she would not attempt to find it just now—she might lose her way altogether.

Her clothes were soaked, and the water streamed down from her hair, forming a puddle at her feet. She thought she heard a faint cry—the cat again, or an owl?—but the storm blotted out all other sounds.

There had been no time to think of ghosts, but now that she was settled in one place, Usha remembered Grandfather's story about the lightning-blasted ruins. She hoped and prayed that lightning would not strike her.

Thunder boomed over the hills, and the lightning came quicker now. Then there was a bigger flash, and for a moment the entire ruin was lit up. A streak of blue sizzled along the floor of the building. Usha was staring straight ahead and, as the opposite wall was lit up, she saw



crouching in the unused fireplace, two small figures—children!

The ghostly figures looked up, staring back at Usha. And then everything was dark again.

Usha's heart was in her mouth. She had seen, without a doubt, two ghosts on the other side of the room, and she wasn't going to remain in the ruins one minute longer.

She ran towards the big gap in the wall through which she had entered. She was halfway across the open space when something—someone—fell against her. Usha stumbled, got up, and again bumped into something. She gave a frightened scream. Someone else screamed. And then there was a shout, a boy's shout, and Usha instantly recognized the voice.

"Suresh!"

"Usha!"

"Binya!"

They fell into each other's arms, so surprised and



relieved that all they could do was laugh and giggle and repeat each other's names.

Then Usha said, "I thought you were ghosts."

"We thought you were a ghost," said Suresh.

"Come back under the roof," said Usha.

They huddled together in the corner, chattering with excitement and relief.

"When it grew dark, we came looking for you," said Binya. "And then the storm broke."

"Shall we run back together?" asked Usha. "I don't want to stay here any longer."

"We'll have to wait till morning," said Suresh, "and I'm so hungry!"

The storm continued, but they were not afraid now. They gave each other warmth and confidence. Even the ruins did not seem so forbidding.

After an hour, the rain stopped and the thunder grew more distant.

Toward dawn the whistling thrush began to sing. Its sweet broken notes flooded the ruins with music. As it

grew lighter, they saw that the plum tree stood upright again, though it had lost all its blossoms.

"Let's go," said Usha.

Outside the ruins, walking along the brow of the hill, they watched the sky grow pink. When they were some distance away, Usha looked back and said, "Can you see something behind the wall? It's like a hand waving."

"It's just the top of the plum tree," said Binya.

"Good-bye, good-bye..."—voices on the wind.

"Who said good-bye?" asked Usha.

"Not I," said Suresh.

"Not I," said Binya.

"I heard someone calling."

"It's only the wind."

Usha looked back at the ruins. The sun had come up and was touching the top of the hill.

"Come on," said Suresh. "I'm hungry."

They hurried along the path to the village.

"Good-bye, good-bye..." Usha heard them calling. Or was it just the wind?

## Nutrine celebrates Teacher's Day

Nutrine, the Confectionary giant, completed 50 years of spreading sweetness among Indian children. Though a company manufacturing toffees and sweets for children's delight, Nutrine has time and again looked beyond the horizon and recognised and promoted various socially responsible issues that it feels would inculcate and nurture a responsible value system among children. For, Nutrine's target audience today are the country's ambassadors of tomorrow.

Taking a major step forward in this direction, Nutrine paid its tribute to the teachers in Chennai on the occasion of Teachers Day on September 5. Children were invited to send in details of their Class teacher and mail them to Nutrine. Nutrine's Uncle Bunny did the selection of 20 teachers and associated students. On Teachers Day, Uncle Bunny visited and honoured the selected teachers in various schools and distributed sweets to everyone. Nutrine promises to commit itself and associate with such value-enhancing events in future.





# Food for thought... and a thought for your food

**P**ooja and Rashmi were not in a mood to go to school! They were just not enthused by the topic of the special lecture. Who wants to sit and listen to an hour's lecture and that too on 'Rice'?

"What's the big deal? I mean, it's like any other food that we eat," said Rashmi.

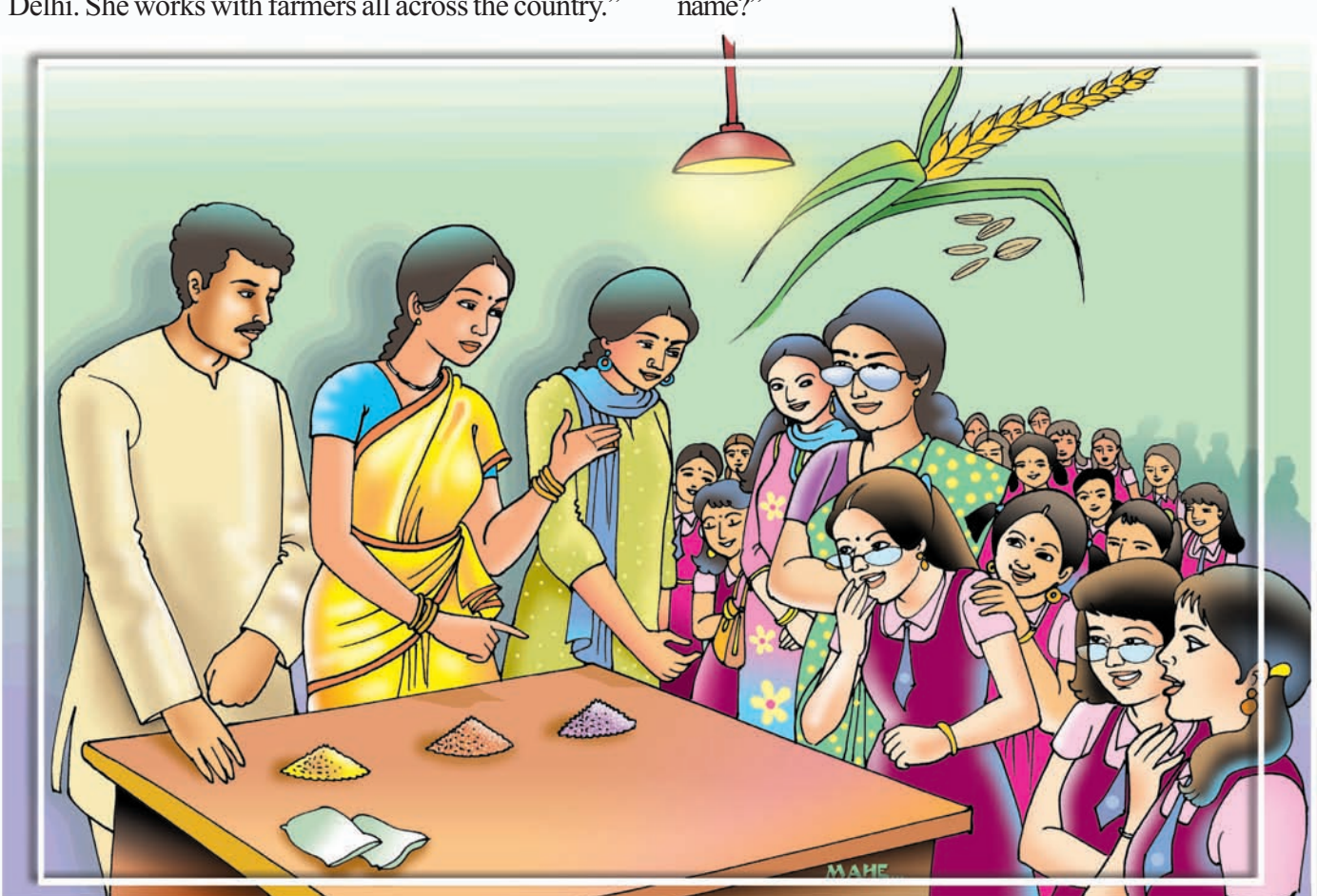
With total disinterest, the two of them entered the school auditorium. They exchanged exasperated glances with their classmates and with a big fat swollen face sat down to listen to the lecture.

The principal Ms. Raman welcomed the three guests of the day, Laxmi Algod, Ajay Negi, and Shaila Rao. "Laxmi Algod and Ajay Negi are farmers from Karnataka and Uttaranchal. Along with them is Ms. Shaila Rao from Delhi. She works with farmers all across the country."

After the usual greetings, Ms. Rao asked the students: "You all must be knowing about this entity called Rice? No matter which part of India you come from, you sure would have seen it in different forms! If you are from Northern India you must have enjoyed eating *rajma-chawal*, or *chawal ki kheer*, and if from the South, among other things you must be relishing either *biryani* or *idli-dosa*!"

Rashmi whispered to Pooja: "Gosh, I'm going off to sleep!" But Pooja had begun to get a wee bit interested. "Shhh.....It's not that bad." Rashmi could not believe what Pooja said, and turned her face back to Ms. Rao.

By now, Ms. Rao had noticed Rashmi being distracted, and pointed to her and said "Hi, what is your name?"





“Rashmi,” she answered in a matter-of-fact manner.

“Okay. Can I ask you a question?” said Ms. Rao and without waiting for Rashmi’s response asked, “What do you think is the colour of rice?”

Rashmi looked confused, and said, “White, I suppose!”

Ms. Rao then turned towards Ms. Raman, and she said: “I’ve seen brown rice, too.”

At this point, Laxmi Algod and Ajay Negi took out the small bags they were carrying, and emptied its contents. To the surprise of the students and the principal, they saw rice grains in colours they could have never imagined! There was red, yellow, and purple... along with the different shades of white and brown. Each of them was a different variety of rice.

Pooja and Rashmi were dumbstruck! They looked at the rice samples with total fascination. Ms. Rao then handed over the mike to Laxmi. Karan Bhaiyya, the auditorium in charge, came running from behind with an extra mike for Ajay. So it was over to Laxmi and Ajay.

Laxmi asked the students: “Whatever do you think is associated with rice, apart from eating, that is?”

When all she could hear was a murmur amongst the students, she continued. “Let me not tax your brain too much. There are quite a few festivals in India that have something to do with rice. In Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of South India, *Pongal* is a rice harvest festival. The festival derives its name from a rice

Today rice is grown in almost all States of India. It is believed that the oldest rice specimen in India dates back to about 2000 BC! Its family history can be traced back to our very own sub-continent. Indeed rice was first found to be wild in a field. The family that it belongs to - *Oryza*—has 27 species, of which 25 are wild and two alone are cultivated. Of the two that are cultivated, it is *Oryza sativa* which is grown in the Asian sub-continent. In India alone, there are almost 50,000 varieties of rice that come under the *Oryza sativa indica* group!



preparation, which is made especially on the day the harvest is brought home.

At this point, Ajay interjected and added: “In North India at that time, crisp rice is offered to the fire during the *Lohri* festival. Patterns are made on the floor with rice flour called *rangoli*, so that even insects in the household get their share of the harvest and bless the home and the hearth!” He looked back at Laxmi.

With a twinkle in her eyes, she said: “During the *Onam* festival in Kerala, rice *payasam* is made for dessert.”

“Oh yes,” said Pooja. “In Orissa, at Lord Jagannath’s temple, rice is offered as a *prasad*.” Her classmate Jarjum, from Arunachal Pradesh, then spoke about the *Mioko* festival in which the Apatani tribals offer prayers to the spirits for the welfare of their tribe. The priest distributes rice powder to everyone as a symbol of fertility and life after death. Rice is cooked in a common pot to symbolise the idea of community sharing.

“And there’s more,” said Ms. Rao, with a big smile on her face. In parts of northern and western India, at Diwali time, delicacies are made of pounded semi-cooked rice called *poha*. In Goa, both Hindu and Christian farmers perform the ceremony of *Novidade* in which the local priest

cuts a rice sheaf and brings it to the place of prayer, in a village procession. Have you also noticed that no *puja thali* is complete without a few grains of rice?”

“Phew!” said Rashmi. “Now that’s quite an amazing spread! How little I knew of it! Ms. Rao looked at the students and said, “Okay, now let me pose a serious question.” The students waited with bated breath.

“By now you must have realised how extensively rice is grown and used all over our country,” said Ms. Rao. The children nodded their heads vigorously in agreement. “If that’s the case, then do you think it is fair to consider the rice plant and seeds as someone’s private property?” asked Ms. Rao. “No farmer in India or for that matter in Asia has ever said that rice belongs only to him/her! In fact, rice seeds of different varieties have been freely exchanged amongst farmers.”

Ms. Rao went on to say: “But today, big companies outside India want to change all this. They have been trying to study the traditional rice varieties and farming practices to “invent” new rice varieties. They would,

naturally, apply for a patent (a license) saying such a rice plant belongs only to this company or that and anybody wanting to grow rice would have to buy its seeds from them! The company would thus make private profit from such ‘ownership’.”

Although the children were learning these facts for the first time, they looked concerned. “I’m sure you are finding this difficult to understand and are perhaps feeling helpless, too,” Ajay said. “Maybe you think you can’t help, but you can! Next time you hear of someone trying to stake a claim on your very own rice...just turn round and ask them to let it be as it is...free as ever,” Laxmi added.

Pooja and Rashmi, now totally impressed with the talk, went upto Ajay, Laxmi and Ms. Rao, and said: “Thank you for all this ‘food for thought’ you’ve given us. We had never thought there is so much about the food that we eat!”

**- By Shalini Bhutani & Kanchi Kohli**  
**Courtesy: Kalpavriksh and the National Biodiversity and Strategic Action Plan**

## Meet the... Xingu Indians

The Xingu Indians, so called because they inhabit the banks of the river Xingu in Brazil, are actually a group of eleven tribes of different origins who live close together in harmony. A casual observer cannot make out the differences in their houses, ornaments, household goods, weapons, or hairstyles of each tribe. Men of the Kamayura tribe have the tradition of fishing with the help of bows and arrows.

Each tribal village has a bare central space surrounded by four or more *malocas* - huge thatched huts measuring up to 80 ft long and 30 ft high. The families share these, with each having its own section of the hut.

Xingu men are muscular and keep themselves fit by practising wrestling. Their hair is cut in a tonsured fringe and plastered down with a decorative veneer of red and black dyes. For festivals, they decorate themselves with necklaces of shells or jaguar teeth and other ornaments and headdresses of colourful feathers. The Xingu women are less splendidly ornamented. However, on festivals they paint their bodies with vivid geometric patterns.

Although tribal affairs are decided by the council of male elders, women enjoy equality with men. Married life is stable and there is family harmony.

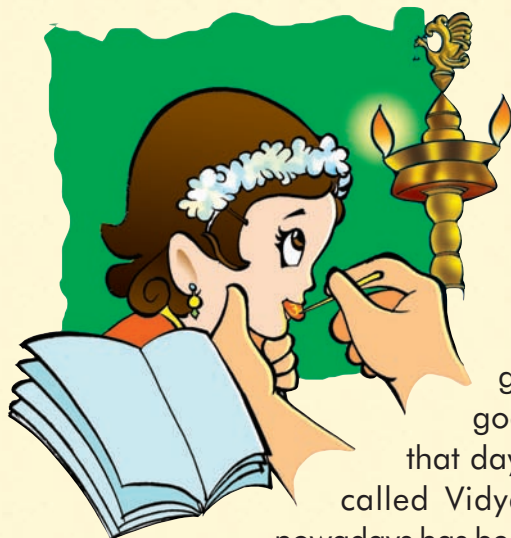
The tribes have a rich mythology in which the animals and spirits of the river and forest play a crucial role. They also have a crowded calendar of festivals to celebrate various events, which serve as occasions for inter-tribe bonding.







## First lessons on tongue



**R**emember the story of Kalidasa? As an illiterate youngster, he shut himself up in a Kali temple and the goddess inscribed something on his tongue with her trident, and he became a great literary figure to adorn the court of Vikramaditya as one of his Navarathnas. The day after Navaratri is celebrated in most States as Vijayadasami to commemorate the victory of goddess Durga over demon Mahishasura. In certain other States, goddess Saraswati is worshipped. Being the goddess of Learning, that day children are initiated to learning the three R's. In Kerala, it is called Vidyarambham (*Vidya*-learning; *arambham*-beginning), which nowadays has been given great importance. Temples register the names of children to be initiated and priests or some famous personalities act as gurus and inscribe Om or Hari Sri or the first letter of the alphabet on the tongue with a golden stylus. Many spiritual organisations invite literary dignitaries to perform this ceremony. Last year, even a mosque in Kodungalloor came forward to perform this ritual for the neighbourhood children. The 'mulla' helped them to write the first letters of the alphabet on a slate.

In good old days, the child would be seated on the lap of the grandfather, uncle or any senior member of the family, who would guide the child to write with the index finger on rice or sand spread on the floor. (Vijayadasami this year falls on October 5.)

## Regal dinosaur

**I**t is now official. Dinosaurs had roamed the Indian soil, say, some 65,000,000 years ago! A fossil found from near the banks of river Narmada has been identified as that of a dinosaur 30 ft long, 5 ft tall, and sporting a crest of horn on its head. Named '*Rajasaurus Narmadensis*', meaning regal reptile from the Narmada, the fossil recovered from Rhioh village in Gujarat is the first ever assembled skull of a dinosaur of any kind in India.





*Jammu and Kashmir is the northernmost extremity of India. The Kashmir Valley is set amidst the Himalayas that towers up to 18,000 feet. River Jhelum cuts across the land and forms the highways and the main source of sustenance.*

*All these things along with the rich variety of flora and fauna makes the State a 'Paradise on earth'.*

*The most magnificent tree in the Kashmir valley is the Chinar. This is found all over the valley. It grows to a giant size and the leaves change their colours according to the season.*

*The deodar, pine, fir, walnut, cedar, and almond add to the rich flora of Kashmir.*

*The dense forests of the State are the home of many animals like ibex, snow leopard, musk deer, wolf, red bear, black bear, yak, Tibetan antelope, and wild ass.*

*The major rivers that flow through the State are the Indus, Chenab, Jhelum, and Ravi. Apart from these, numerous streams and lakes are also found here.*

*Jammu is famous for its temples. It is also known as the city of temples. The famous temples of Jammu are Bahu Mata and the Raghunath Mandir complex.*

# The Precious Gift

Nestled amidst the high mountains of the Himalayas was a small village. This village was surrounded by inaccessible terrain on three sides, while on its fourth was a vast lake. The only way to reach the village was by crossing the lake and more often than not, the lake remained frozen. However, the village was self-sufficient and they had everything they wanted, and what they did not have they exchanged with each other through the barter system.

With the lake remaining frozen for eight months in a year, the village was totally isolated from the rest of the country. Since they only traded or exchanged goods, the villagers had never dealt with money nor did they possess any. So much so, even in the 19th century, the villagers had not seen a single coin. They had not even heard about it! So, you can imagine the commotion that took place in the village when on a bright morning a villager came upon





a silver coin. Actually, some bird that was flying overhead had dropped the coin accidentally. The coin had the face of their king on one side and a royal seal on the other.

The villager did not know what to do with it.

“Take it to the *nambardar* (village headman). He’ll know what to do with it,” said the potter.

“Yes, he’ll come up with some novel way to deal with it,” seconded the fisherman.

So the villager took it to the *nambardar* who was considered the wisest man in the village. He, too, was amazed on seeing the coin. The sudden appearance of this new shining round metal had the whole village agog with excitement. They assembled in the village square and debated in detail about it. It was then decided that the *nambardar* would come up with a solution the next day.

The *nambardar* pondered the problem all through the rest of the day and night. He spent a restless day and a sleepless night. At the end, the *nambardar* came up with his decision.

He appeared before the assembled crowd and spoke at length.

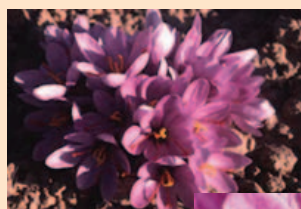
“Friends,” he said, “this is the first coin we are looking at. It also has the face of our esteemed ruler.” He then saluted the ruler’s image on the coin. His listeners also followed suit.

“God grant our king all prosperity and success,” he continued. “I think the most befitting thing would be to gift this honoured token to our majesty in person.”



The entire village unanimously agreed with the *nambardar* verdict. Their next discussion was how best the gift could be taken and presented to the king.

The *nambardar* again came up with a suggestion. He told the villagers that such a beautiful gift must be placed in a decorated palanquin and carried by six elders, whom the *nambardar* would nominate.



## Royal saffron

Saffron is the most royal and expensive of all spices. It is primarily grown in Kashmir at a place called Pampore near Srinagar. For centuries, saffron has been grown in these ancient fields.

Kashmir has the ideal soil and climatic conditions for cultivating saffron. The violet flowers grow singly and bear the yellow styles that branches into three orange-red stigmas. These stigmas are dried to make the most precious spice in the world.

The Kashmiri handicraft and finesse can be seen at the saffron fields. They are exceptionally equipped for handling this delicate and precious work. They painstakingly remove stigma after stigma and dry them under natural conditions. It takes as many as 150,000 stigmas to make one kilo of produce!



So the villagers came together to build the palanquin. The woodcutter cut down the best wood. The carpenter worked on this wood and built a fine palanquin. The carpet makers wove a fine woollen blanket while the weavers wove a silken curtain that was embroidered by the women and draped over the palanquin. The woollen blanket was carefully spread inside the palanquin.

The *nambardar* then selected the six people to tote the palanquin. He then asked all the village folk to assemble at the village square. In their august presence, he placed the silver coin reverently on a piece of silk that was carefully placed over the woollen blanket inside the palanquin. He then drew the silk curtains of the palanquin. The coin was treated as if it were a newly wed bride being taken to her husband's place.

A boat was kept ready to ferry the palanquin across the lake. The palanquin was carried to the boat to the accompaniment of songs sung by women for the king's success. The boat was also decorated with flowers and filled with all the necessary things needed

for the long journey. The palanquin was placed in the boat very carefully. The villagers then bade good-bye and the *nambardar* standing in the boat waved back.

The palanquin was given the seat of honour and treated reverently. No one sat or stood with his back towards the palanquin. They lit a lamp in the evening and kept it burning till dawn. One of them remained awake throughout the night to keep a watch. When they passed other boats, the curious onlookers would ask them about the palanquin. But the villagers only told them that a precious gift was being taken to the king. They would not reveal the nature of the gift.

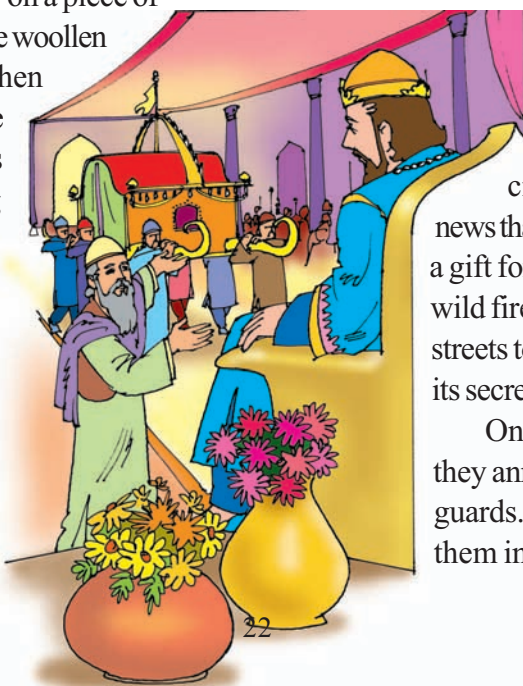
On the morning of the third day, they reached the capital. At the riverbank, the elders hoisted the palanquin to their shoulders. As a mark of respect they even removed their footwear. They had tied a piece of scarf around their back like an ancient courtier. Four of them carried the palanquin. One carried the royal flag ahead of them. The *nambardar* walked behind the palanquin humbly with folded hands.

They were all very happy as they were carrying a very precious gift for their king. Passers-by were impressed by their appearance and festive attitude. At the gates of the city, the tax collector wanted to see what was inside the palanquin. The *nambardar* protested and refused to allow him have a look inside the palanquin saying, "The king will have a look at it first. No one must even peek into it." When the tax collector realised that the villagers would not allow him to have a look at it, he

gave up and allowed them to go into the city.

The small procession had to pass through the main streets of the city before reaching the palace. The news that some simple villagers were carrying a gift for the king in a palanquin spread like wild fire. Curious onlookers gathered in the streets to gaze and admire the palanquin and its secret gift.

Once the villagers reached the palace, they announced their purpose of visit to the guards. The king asked the guards to allow them inside and treat them as his personal





guests. The villagers were thrilled at the hospitality showered on them. They praised the king with all the words they knew. After they were inside the palace, they treated the palanquin with the utmost reverence. The guards and other members in the palace were intrigued but did not dare ask them about the gift, lest the villagers felt insulted.

Meanwhile, the villagers basked in the glory and treatment they were getting. "How will the king react when he sees our present? What will he think is a suitable reward for us?" wondered the *nambardar* aloud. The village elders came up with their own views.

The king sent for the villagers after his afternoon siesta. The prime minister and other dignitaries were present in the hall. The *nambardar* came in and paid his respects. The elders then placed the palanquin on the floor and stood in reverence. The *nambardar* then addressed the king: "Your Highness, we have come from the distant village off the lake in your kingdom. I, along with these men, the elders in our village, wish to present you with an unusual gift. We have covered this entire distance with just happiness in our hearts on account of our duty. We request your permission to place our humble *nazar* at your esteemed feet."

"Good people, I'm touched by your loyalty and the pains you have taken to bring this *nazar* from afar. You may give it to me now."

The *nambardar* then lifted a curtain and put his hand inside the palanquin. He groped around and was at once perplexed. He then lifted all the four curtains and searched inside. He called to the elders and whispered something to them. The elders, too, crowded around the palanquin but nothing was coming forth. They searched the palanquin thoroughly but still could not trace the precious gift!

The prime minister lost his patience. "How much more time will you take, you rustics? The king has other important matters to look into."

The villagers could do nothing about it. In their eagerness, they had carried the palanquin in such a fashion, that the coin had slipped away!

The prime minister wanted to punish the villagers for insulting the king. He asked the king to throw them into prison.



"How can we even think of insulting your highness? I invoke your mercy and seek your permission to explain the whole episode to you," said the *nambardar*.

The king realised that these villagers were simple, loyal people who wanted to present him a *nazar* and not insult him. But he also wanted to test their simplicity.

He ordered them to be placed in a room and to be given all the ingredients to prepare their dinner. Instead of giving them live coal, they were given a matchstick. The poor villagers did not know how to make fire with it and ate whatever they could raw.

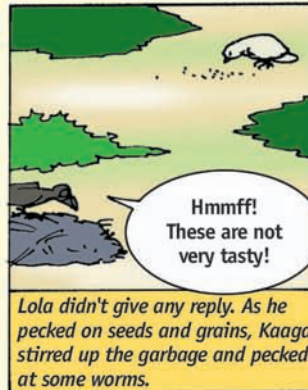
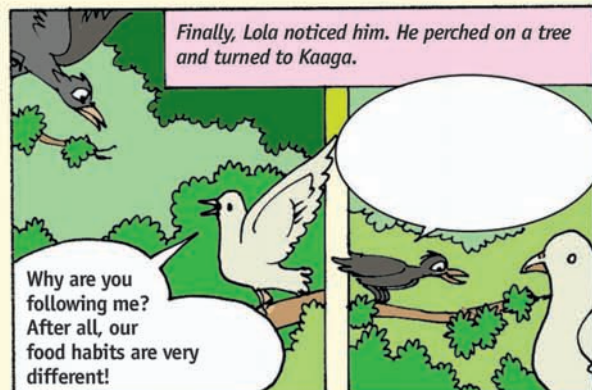
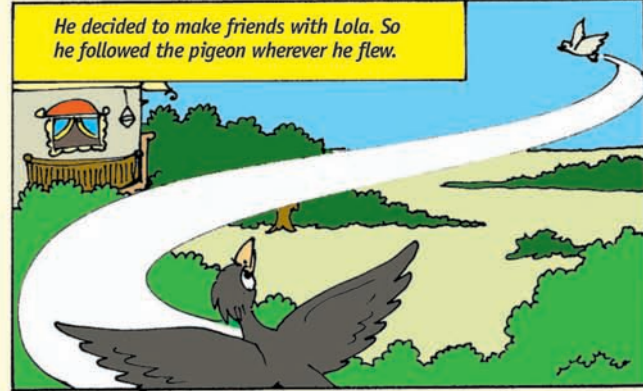
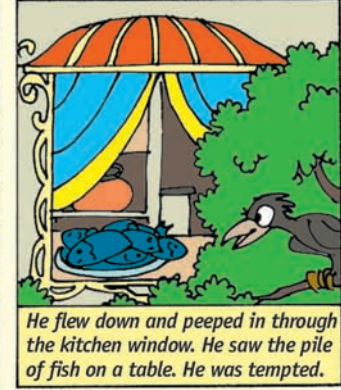
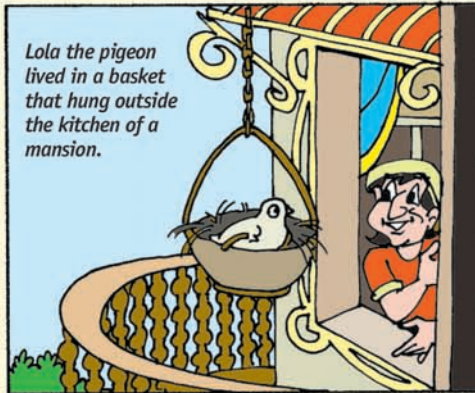
When the king heard of this, he was convinced of their innocence. He listened to their whole story. He had a hearty laugh at their simple faith. He gave the *nambardar* a silver coin and accepted it back from him. "Now, your *nazar* has been accepted by me," said the king.

The king gave them suitable gifts and reduced the land rent and tax on their village. The villagers thanked the king profusely before leaving the palace.

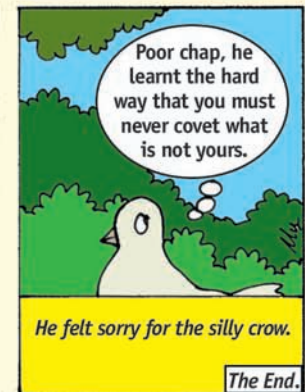
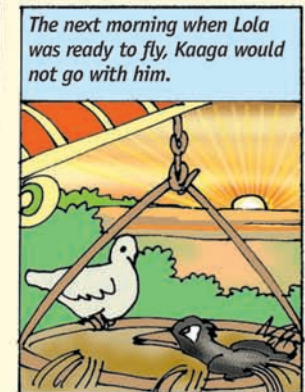
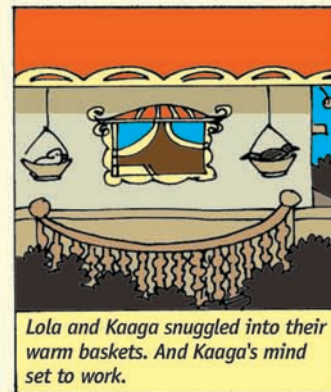
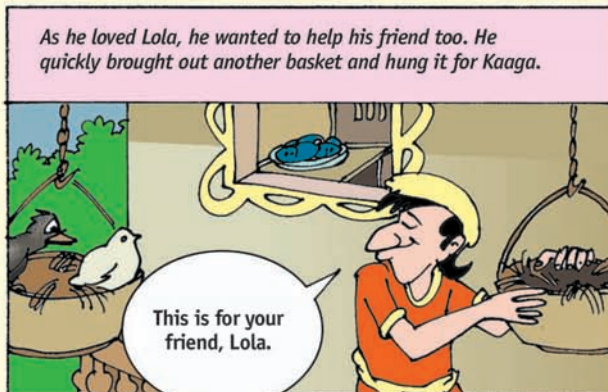
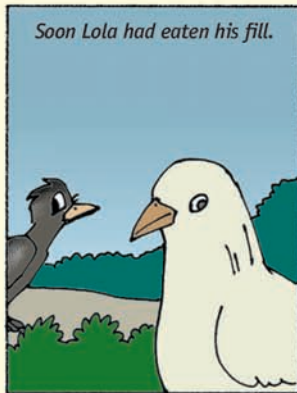
Once the villagers reached their village, they narrated the story of how they were saved from being put in prison.

- Retold by Vidhya Raj











## One that swam against the current

**H**ardwar at the foot of the Himalayas had been a holy place since times immemorial. It had been the seat of so many yogis and gurus who had their ashrams there.

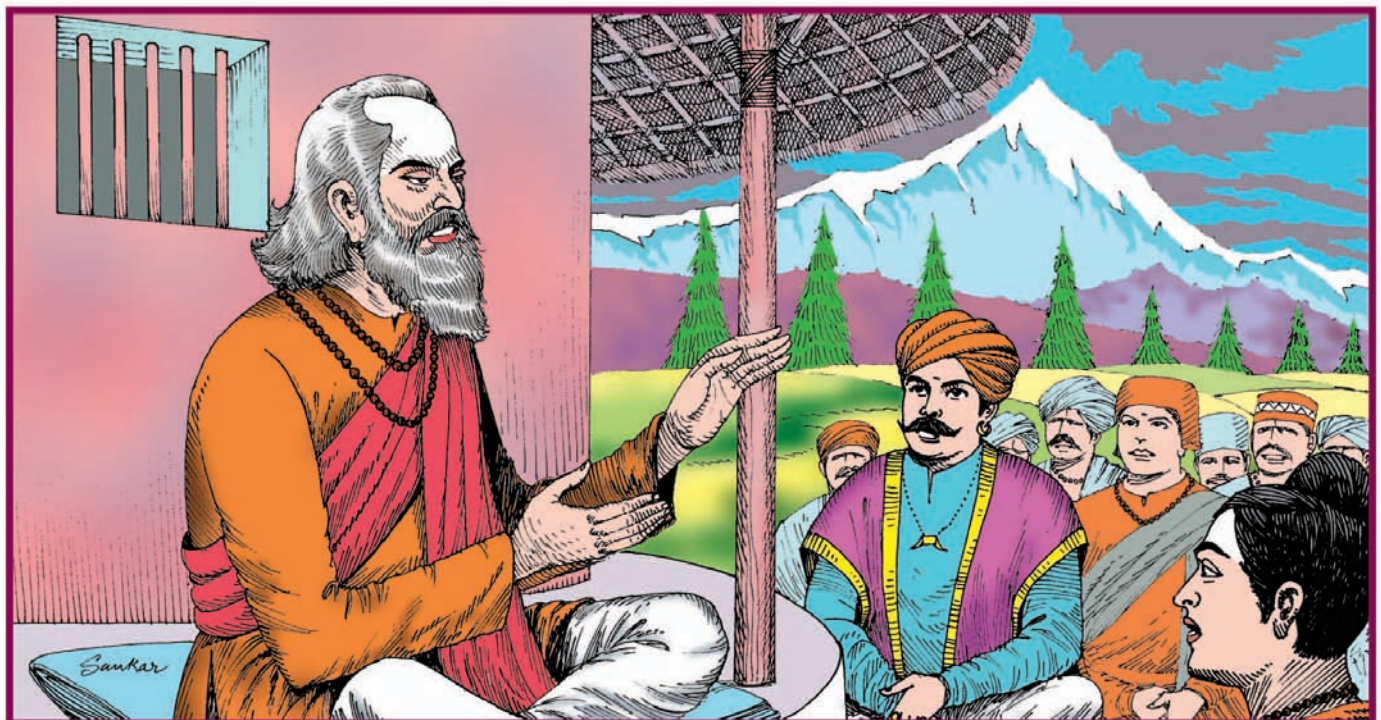
A wealthy merchant from the plains used to visit the holy place from time to time. He had accepted as his guru a venerable old sage who was known as a very wise man. Whenever there was any loss in business or some misunderstanding with his partners or whenever his wife or sons disagreed with him on any issue, the merchant who felt disgusted, went away to Hardwar. The guru received him with kindness. The merchant found peace in the ashram, more so in the presence of the guru.

He always loved to sit near the guru whenever the latter spoke to his disciples. He loved to listen to the master's words. Of course, it did not mean that he understood everything the guru said. The pity is, he did not even agree with the guru on certain things which he presumed he understood. For example, whenever he put forth any of his personal problems before the sage, the

latter simply said, "My son, if you wish to have peace of mind, surrender yourself to the Divine." He did not understand how the Divine came into the picture if one of his business partners betrayed him or if a huge quantity of his goods was stolen while in transit!

"Sir, shouldn't I go to the police or the court when somebody cheats me? Can the Divine help me in such mundane matters?" he would ask the guru on different occasions in different words. The guru's response would always be the same, though in different words. The essence of his advice was, he could go to the police and the court; he could even succeed in punishing those who cheated him and recover the goods stolen.

But that would not ensure peace for him. Any moment another naughty little problem would crop up to annoy him. Let him by all means do whatever was necessary and natural for carrying on his business in an honest way, but if he really desired peace of mind he must learn to surrender himself to the Divine. Even if he failed in achieving his ultimate end, he could still remain content







with the situation, provided he really mastered the habit of surrendering to the Supreme who knows what is good and what is bad for him, better than himself!

One night the merchant went on arguing with the guru for a long time on this issue. The sage never lost patience with anybody, but when he understood that he had been unable to explain a truth, he just fell silent. That is what the sage did by midnight. The merchant felt sorry that he made the guru sit awake till that hour, apologised to him, and retired to bed.

It was still dark - the sun was an hour away - when the sage woke up the merchant and almost dragged him out of his bed. The merchant was puzzled. Nevertheless, he followed the guru without a word. There had been incessant rain for the past few days and even then it was drizzling. All was quiet. The sage led the merchant to the bank of the mighty Ganga. The river looked fearful with a turbulent and forceful flow.

What did the guru wish to do? The merchant was at his wit's end. "Look there, you fool!" said the Guru, pointing his finger at a huge elephant being swept away by the powerful flow of the river in spate.

"And look here," said the guru, pointing at a tiny fish that was effortlessly swimming against the current, close to the river bank.

"Do you understand anything? Even the great pachyderm cannot fight the tide of circumstances and is being carried away against its will. But this insignificant creature, because it belongs to the river, is capable of moving at its will, even against the mighty current. When you surrender yourself to the Divine, you are in Him. Since He is never disturbed, you too are never disturbed. Well, do you find any light now?" asked the guru giving the merchant a pat on the back.

"I understand, sir. Please pardon my obstinacy," said the merchant in a sincere voice.

- *Visvasvasu*

Emperor Napoleon (1769 - 1821) took 14,000 French decrees and simplified them into a unified set of 7 laws. This was the first time in modern history that a nation's laws applied equally to all citizens. Napoleon's seven laws are so impressive that in the next 200 years, more than 70 governments had patterned their own laws after them or used them verbatim.



# A THOUGHTLESS ACT

**A** sage wandered from village to village, from town to town. He was followed by a lone disciple.

The disciple, a restless young man, was in the habit of talking rashly and often doing things which were not necessary. “My boy, you must try to exercise some control over your speech and your actions,” the sage often reminded him. The young man loved his master and every time promised to act according to his advice.

One hot noon, both of them rested in a shed at the centre of a bazaar. There they saw a grocer’s shop. At that moment, there was no customer in the shop. The shopkeeper was looking at and checking the items in the shop. Absent-mindedly he dipped his fingers in the honey jar and then wiped them against a pillar, leaving a small smear of honey on it.

Just then the sage and his disciple were discussing actions, thoughtful and thoughtless. The sage said, “My boy, what the shopkeeper did just now was

thoughtless. Most troubles arise from thoughtless or unnecessary acts and speech.”

“But, Master, what harm could there be in such an innocent act, even if it served no purpose?” asked the disciple.

“My boy,” said the sage, “I know what you’re thinking. We should not anticipate problems where there is none. What the shopkeeper has done may not seem harmful. But it contains the possibility of harm.”

Suddenly the sage stood up. “Let’s go away,” he said.

“But, Master, it’s still very hot,” murmured the disciple.

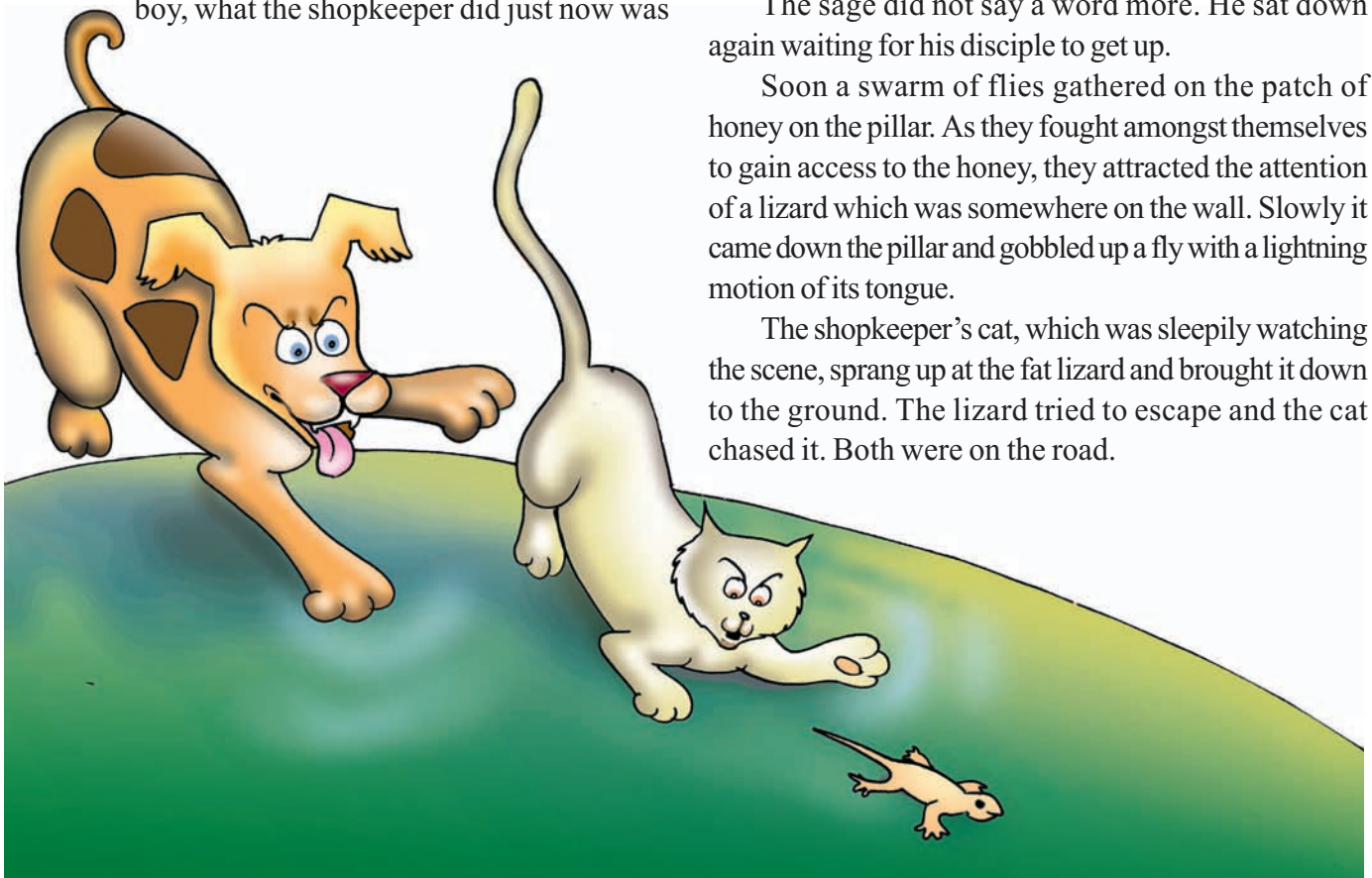
“True, but it’s going to get hotter, I’m afraid!” said the sage.

“Please excuse me, sir. I’m too tired to resume walking immediately,” said the disciple.

The sage did not say a word more. He sat down again waiting for his disciple to get up.

Soon a swarm of flies gathered on the patch of honey on the pillar. As they fought amongst themselves to gain access to the honey, they attracted the attention of a lizard which was somewhere on the wall. Slowly it came down the pillar and gobbled up a fly with a lightning motion of its tongue.

The shopkeeper’s cat, which was sleepily watching the scene, sprang up at the fat lizard and brought it down to the ground. The lizard tried to escape and the cat chased it. Both were on the road.





Suddenly a smart little dog pounced on the cat and bit it. The cat gave out a piercing cry. The shopkeeper hurried down to the road, picked up a brick, and hurled it at the dog.

The dog was hit and it barked furiously and whined, attracting everybody's attention to its injury.

The dog belonged to a rich man who was walking with it to a friend's house. Now it so happened that there was a rift between the shopkeeper's family and that of the rich man. When the man found his pet dog, he raised a hue and cry, claiming that the shopkeeper had injured it to insult him.

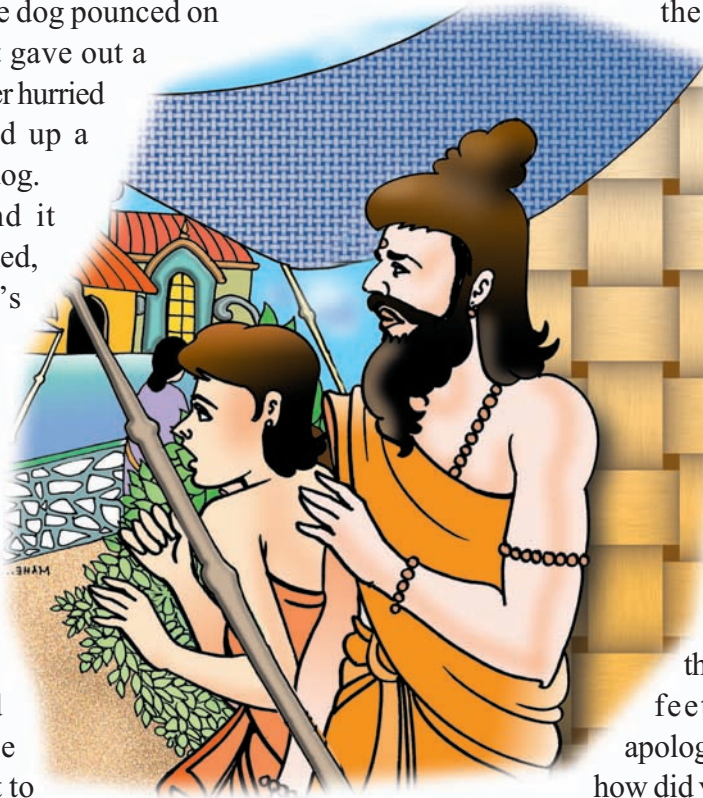
Very soon, his supporters came rushing to punish the shopkeeper. The shopkeeper shouted for help. His people, too, were soon at the spot. In the meantime, an over-enthusiastic servant of the rich man set fire to

the shop. The shopkeeper's friends lost no time in arming themselves with sticks and other weapons and started attacking the landlord's people.

A riot ensued. Several thatches went up in flames. Many a bone was broken.

As flames and smoke blinded the sky, the sage and his disciple left the bazaar. As they breathed freely in the open, the disciple touched the sage's feet and said, "Master, I apologise for disobeying you, but how did you anticipate the riot?"

"My son, when I saw the shopkeeper absent-mindedly dipping his fingers in the honey and thoughtlessly wiping them against the pillar, I had a feeling that his idle action might lead to something unpleasant!" explained the sage.



## Too miserly

Two thieves became friends and went out on business. They watched a house at night. One was an expert climber, the other one was slow.

"Go up first. If you find that all are asleep, drop a coin through the window. On hearing its sound on the pavement, I'll climb," said the second thief.

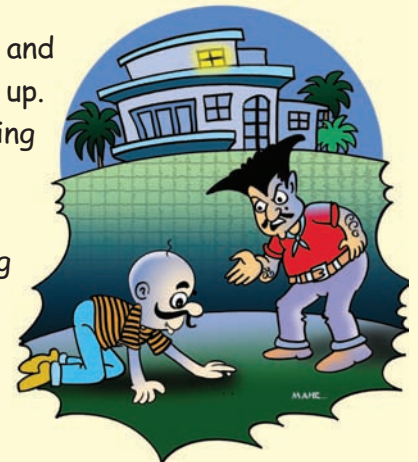
The first thief climbed the wall and reached the upper floor and dropped a coin. But half an hour passed. The second thief did not go up. The first thief could not shout. He climbed down cautiously, spending another half hour and saw his colleague groping for something.

"What're you doing?"

"Looking for the coin I threw down. I had tied it on to a string and pulled it up after it had struck the pavement!"

Just then someone switched on the light in the house.

The thieves sighed. "We were too miserly even to be thieves!" they agreed.



**Reader S.H.Zahid, of Gulbarga, writes:**

My brother, sister, and parents agree with me, and we say, your August issue was very interesting. I particularly liked "When they were young". I am looking forward to reading similar articles about Bhagat Singh and other freedom-fighters.



**Reader G. Ramsri Gautham, Mahboob Nagar, has this to say:**

I am fond of *Chandamama*. I like the stories, humour page, Indiascope, and Kaleidoscope very much. Every child should read *Chandamama* in order to gain knowledge.

**By e-mail from Ashwathi:**

I am staying in Bahrain, studying in Vth Standard. I love reading *Chandamama*. It is wonderful and full of good stories and articles on General Knowledge. I have a suggestion. The HERO quiz does not provide the answers. Please publish the answers after the last date for receipt of entries.

**This came from Radhika, R.A.Puram, Chennai:**

I like the new format of *Chandamama* very much. I am reading it regularly, and I missed "Let us know" which is my favourite. I hope you will bring back the feature.

*Yes, it is back in this issue. Turn to page 64...*  
Editor

## Of 'complicated' and 'complex' stories

**Reader Malini Narendranath of Trivandrum writes:** I was reading some book reviews recently. The reviewers have referred to both 'complicated' and 'complex' stories. Is there any difference?

Doesn't 'complicated' have a negative meaning? It implies that the reader is confused with the plot of the story which has no straight forward narration. Probably, the story has not been well thought of. Quite likely, it must also have been a complicated exercise for the author while writing the story! A complex story will have different levels of narration; however, continuity will be maintained, though the sequences may be intricate. If anyone describes your story as complex, you may take it as a compliment.

**When can anyone have a pipe dream? This query comes from Ramesh Mirjekar of Kolhapur.**

One can have a pipe dream if one is wishing

to buy a flat in Mumbai. Computers in every room can be a pipe dream for a newly started company, which may not be in the IT sector. It can be a pipe dream if an athlete, who holds a national record in an event, hopes to reach a medal standard in Olympics. The expression only means that the ambition may not materialise; only, it will be next to impossible to achieve.

**Sneha Shetty of Bangalore wants to know who can be called a 'movie-buff'.**

Anyone who is enthusiastic about movies—watching movies, reading their reviews, and discussing their good and bad points with others—is a movie-buff. In early 19th century, in New York City many individuals volunteered to put out fires whenever an accident occurred. Probably, fire-stations had not come into being, nor fire-engines. These men were given buff-coloured overcoats. They offered their services, not for money but because they were eager to be of help to others who needed it badly. Slowly, the word buff came to mean an enthusiast of something.

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BETTER  
ENGLISH



# The bird on the high hills

**I**n a forest of pine trees atop the Hangi hills dwelt a wonderful bird. Merchants, king's officers, and travellers who passed through the forest were charmed to hear the bird singing. There was some magic in the bird's voice which kept a listener happy for days together.

The king of the land heard about the strange bird. He said, "If only I could get it, I would live a happier life."

Those who heard the king express such a desire were sure of a handsome reward if they could capture the bird for the king. Some of them went up to the hill looking for the bird. But they could not even get a glimpse of its feathers. Some fellows who thought themselves clever caught other birds and took them to the king. But they were all punished for trying to deceive the king.

Below the hills, in a small hamlet, lived a young man, Naresh. He often spent hours on the hills, listening to the bird. He loved it very much. Once a while the bird would fly down and perch on his shoulder! He was thrilled!

Naresh was now in two minds. He knew that he could perhaps catch hold of the bird and present it to the king. That would bring him the reward, no doubt, and all his problems would be solved. But would that be good for the bird? He climbed the hills and roamed about, thinking deeply whether to look for the bird or not.

Suddenly he heard the familiar sound of the bird. Next moment, the bird flew down and sat on his shoulder.

"Naresh, I know what you're thinking. Well, let me narrate an incident to you. If you don't feel sorry at it, I shall go with you. But if you are given to sorrow, I shall fly away," the bird proposed.

Naresh agreed to the condition. The bird then narrated the incident.



Once upon a time there was a hunter who had a dog that was extremely faithful to him. One day, while the hunter and his dog were returning from the forest, they met a trader. His cart, loaded with bags of silver, had stopped because one of its wheels had come off. The trader requested the hunter to stand guard over his wealth so that he could visit the nearby village and find someone to repair the wheel.

The hunter agreed to oblige him. But the trader took a long time to return and the hunter had important work to do in the evening. After directing his dog to guard the cart, he left the place.

A little later the trader came back. Pleased with the dog, he gave it a piece of silver. The dog returned to his master at night, the silver held in its mouth.

On seeing the dog returning with the silver, an evil suspicion entered the hunter's mind. He thought that the dog might have stolen the silver and run away from its duty. Furious, he beat it to death.

"What a pity! The poor dog was not only innocent, but so faithful!" commented Naresh.

"I see that you feel sorry for the dog. Hence, let me go," said the bird and it flew away.



Naresh had come half way down the hill. He went up again, and again the bird hopped on to his shoulder, and said, "Let me now narrate to you an incident on the same condition." And the bird told the following story:

There was no rain for a whole year. A farmer went out in search of an area where there would be enough water. He roamed about for long and entered a forest.

He could hear the sound of a flowing stream. But he was too tired and thirsty to look for it. He sat down in the shadow of a rock for a rest.

As he looked up, he saw drops of water falling from the rock overhead. Thinking that some water had strayed from the main stream, he collected the drops on a leaf. But, just as he was about to drink from the leaf, a little bird made a dive towards it and toppled the leaf along with its content.

The farmer flew into a rage. He hit the bird with a stone, killing it at once.

Then he found the stream and quenched his thirst. But as his eyes went to the top of the rock, he saw a terrible snake lying there. What he had thought to be drops of water were indeed poison from the snake's fang.

"How sad that he killed the bird which saved his life!" exclaimed Naresh.

The bird on his shoulder tittered and said, "Now, Naresh, we beasts and birds are never properly understood by human beings. They treat us cruelly at the slightest pretext. Do you still want me to live in the king's court? Won't you rather have me sing to you and other travellers at my free will?"

"Yes, yes, please continue to be here in the forest. Your friendship is my greatest reward. I want no reward from the king," said kind-hearted Naresh.

The bird flew away into the green woods and sang for a long time, charming all travellers.

## The other half

A landlord was once looking for an eligible bachelor for his daughter. He asked a matchmaker to find out a good match. The matchmaker introduced the landlord to a young man of his choice. He knew that he would receive a heavy reward if the landlord were to accept his proposal.

"Sir, he's very handsome. His eyes are like lotus-buds, his arms are long! His brain works like a streak of lightning," he said.

"But I don't like lotus-buds. I would rather have them round. And very long arms are no good. So far as brain is concerned...."

The anxious matchmaker then cut in, "Sir, only one of his eyes is like the lotus-bud; the other one is round as a ball. Only one of his arms is long, the other one is short, like that of a turtle. Only half of his brain works like lightning, the other half is as dead as a clod of earth!"



## KALEIDOSCOPE

### DOES GANDHI MATTER?

Mahatma Gandhi preached and practised non-violence. This was the 'weapon' he used for liberating India from the clutches of the mighty imperialistic British rulers. It needs a lot of self-restraint and strong will to pursue the path of non-violence.

Does Gandhiji matter? I would like to answer the question in the affirmative. The principles of non-violence, truthfulness and self-sacrifice, which are the hallmarks of Gandhiji's character still find a place in dealing with the present day problems. In fact, these problems are the consequences of not following the path shown by the Mahatma.

The clarion call given by Gandhiji during the freedom struggle and afterwards to shun violence in all forms—be truthful, choose non-violence as the weapon in dealing with the problems, self-sacrifice and brotherhood among various religions and communities—should remain the guiding principles of the present day rulers, political leaders and the general public, wherever they ought to be. Only then, for sure, can we say that India in particular and the world in general can come out of situations causing worry and threatening the very existence of mankind with all the latest weaponry systems.

Let us earnestly hope and pray to God that better sense will prevail on those pursuing the path of violence, and make them eschew violence and follow the path shown by the Mahatma. So that the whole of mankind can live in peace and harmony.

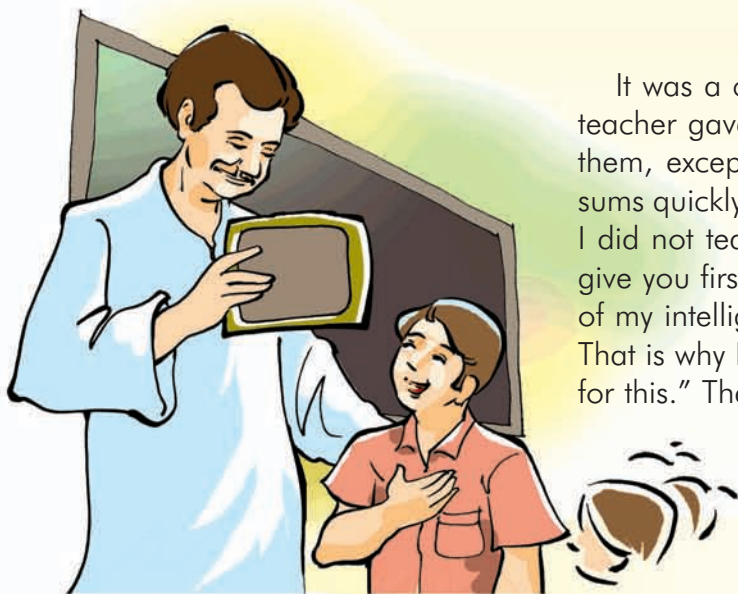
**SK. Khader Vali (12) Jaggaipet**

### TRUTH

It was a classroom in one of the schools in Kolhapur. The teacher gave a few sums. The students were unable to solve them, except Gopal who was an intelligent boy. He did the sums quickly. The teacher was surprised and said, "Well done. I did not teach these sums, but still you have done it. I shall give you first rank." "But," said Gopal, "sir, it is not because of my intelligence, but my cousin had taught me these sums. That is why I was able to solve them. I don't deserve first rank for this." The teacher appreciated the boy's honesty.

He was none other than the great freedom fighter, Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

**P. Raghav Chaitanya (13), Hyderabad.**



## EARLY IN THE MORNING

Early in the morning,  
As soon as I get up,  
What's that shining down on me?  
'Tis indeed the sun!  
I want to see this pretty sight,  
But there is very little time,  
So I take the covers off,  
And get up, and run!

**Neeha Nandam (10) North Carolina, USA**



## GOING TO GRADE ONE

Going to Grade One  
That sounds exciting.  
I'm sure it will be fun,  
I shall make lots of friends,  
And we'll play together all the time.  
What will my teacher be like?  
Will she like to draw or write?  
But there's one thing I know is right,  
Grade One, Grade One  
I can't wait to learn and be bright.

**Parag Keshav Bhatia-Verma (5) Ottawa, Canada**

## GOD'S OWN WAY

Crave not for what you have not,  
For God has destined your lot.  
Grieve not for what you forgot,  
For God has bestowed all you got.  
If in this world you get all you want,  
If in this world you lose all you earned,  
Thank the good lord for all his mercies.  
If parting is painful,  
Much more painful is birth,  
If only we could choose our destinies,  
Then what is the purpose of desire?  
To choose and reject are two poles apart,  
For if we had our way,  
I'am sure God will guide our way.

**Sweta Pratap (14) Chennai**





**Teacher :** If I give you four rabbits today and three more tomorrow, how many rabbits will you have in all?

**Anwar :** Eight.

**Teacher :** Wrong. You will have only seven.

**Anwar :** No, ma'am. I will have eight as I already have one at home.



**Cecil D'cruz (10), Mumbai**



**Sai :** Why did the man with one hand cross the road?

**Siva :** Probably he wanted to go to the secondhand shop! (To buy a second hand.)



Ramu was found writing something on an ass.

**His father asked :**

What are you doing, Ramu?

**Ramu :** Our class teacher has asked us to write an essay on an ass.

**Paulomi Hajira (11), Durgapur**

**Mother :** (On seeing her son making holes in a book) Sonu, what're you doing?

**Sonu :** Mother, our teacher has asked us to go through the book.



**N. Saiprashanth (6), Mysore**

**Arun :** O God! Please make Mumbai India's capital please...



**Mother (after overhearing her son):** Why do you keep praying so ?

**Arun :** In today's GK test, I wrote that Mumbai is India's capital. I know it is not correct. Hence my prayer.

**Shreeja (10) Tuticorin**

**First Ghost :** Why did that person build a fence around the cemetery?

**Second Ghost :**

People were dying to get in! (only way to find a place in the cemetery)



**Nitesh Dutta Dhanekula (10), Australia**



**Peter :** What's this, Paul?

You've put on a strange pair of socks; one is brown, the other is blue!

**Paul :** It's really strange, Peter. I've another pair at home; one is blue and the other is brown!



**M.V. Sai Aparna (13), Hyderabad.**



## IDENTITY PARADE

There was a daylight robbery and various people saw a thief running away. They described the thief varyingly. One person said, he had a scar on his left cheek. Another was sure, he did not have a moustache, but his eyebrows were bushy. A third person remembered that the man had dark hair of medium length. A fourth

had noticed that he had a long, but thin nose. And a fifth person seems to have seen the man's large mouth. Can you identify the robber from the drawings given here? If you find it impossible, look below for the answer.

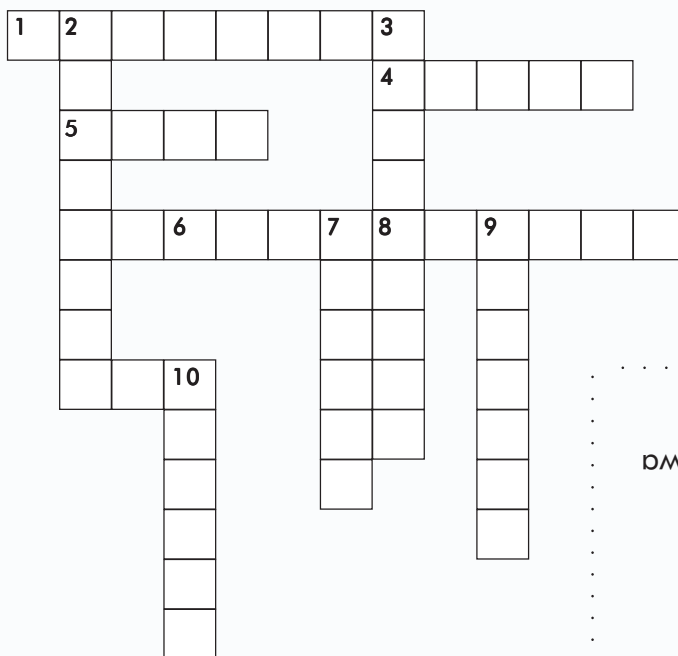
T. Akshaya (13), Chennai.

## WHO IS THE SHORTEST ?

Vipul is taller than Hans; Hans is taller than Anand; Alok is taller than Ashok; Ashok is taller than Hans. Who is the shortest?



## CAPITAL CROSSWORD



Find the capital of :

**Across:** 1.UAE 4.South Korea  
5.Qatar 6.Norway 8.Bahrain

**Down:** 2.Hungary 3.Pakistan  
7.Canada 9.Kenya 10.Cuba.

Varsh Varghese (10), Trichur.

Answers:

Identity Parade : D

Shortest : Anand

Capitals : Across : 1.Abu Dhabi

4.Seoul 5.Doha 6.Oslo 8.Manama

Down : 2.Budapest 3.Islamabad 7.Ottawa

9.Nairobi 10.Havana



Shantipur is in turmoil. King Shantidev helps his queen and infant son to escape. He fights Vir Singh's men and jumps into the river by the side of the fort. Jayananda and disciples come upon a child and a woman who passes away in their presence. Someone has to take care of the body, but who?

# ARYA

The Mystery of the Unknown Prince



Art:  
Gandhi Ayya



Jayananda sits in meditation.  
Bhaga and Bhagi approach him.



As he pats them, the tigers lick his hands.

I've some work for you two.  
Guard the woman's body.



Nobody should touch it or take it away.  
She'll be buried tomorrow.

The animals rise to touch his shoulders as if they have understood their mission.



The sage and his disciples leave the place after watching the tigers circling the body.



The sage and disciples return to the hermitage, and are greeted by the animals and birds in the forest.





Monku the monkey comes down from the tree. Other animals, too, join the group. The child is not only comfortable in the hands of the ageing bear, but enjoys the antics of the animals.



(To continue)



# That's not true

Shiju loved to listen to stories, but at the end of the story he would invariably exclaim, "That's not true!"

One day, he was standing at the gate of his cottage when he saw the village pandit going by. He beckoned him and requested him to tell a story. "I shall tell you a story but on one condition," said the pandit. "When I finish the story, you should not say 'That's not true.' If you say that, you'll pay me a hundred rupees."

"Okay. But if I make *you* say it, you will pay me two hundred rupees," said Shiju.

"Agreed," said the pandit. "I'll tell you the story of a king who lived in Mithila a long time ago. One day this king got onto his horse to go for a stroll around the city. As he entered his palace gardens he heard a bird crying 'Cheep.... Cheep.' As he looked up at the tree to spot the bird, the bird flew away but not before soiling the king's robe with its droppings.

"The king sent for a new robe and when the servant had brought it, he took off the soiled robe, threw it away

and put on the new one. The king resumed his journey. A little later, the bird called out again and when the king looked up, it soiled his sword with its droppings. The king sent his servant for a new sword.

"The king then made up his mind not to look up if the bird cried out again. But when it did, he could not resist looking up, and this time the bird dropped its load directly on his head.

"The king sent his servant to bring him a new head and when he had brought it, the king cut off his head with his sword....."

"Huh, that's not true!" blurted Shiju.

"No, it isn't," agreed the pandit, triumphantly, "but you've uttered the prohibited words and you had agreed to give me a hundred rupees as penalty!"

"But I had promised you only fifty rupees!" said Shiju cunningly.

"That's not true!" cried the poor pandit.

"You're right. But since I made you say those very same words, you have to pay me two hundred rupees."



## Where are the holes?

A farmer from a village once paid a visit to the city. A fashionable store attracted his attention. He went in and gazed at different items with amusement in his eyes.

Appreciating a felt hat, he asked a salesman, "What's its price?"

The salesman knew that the farmer did not mean to buy it. "Ten thousand rupees!" he said.

The farmer nodded. "But where are the holes?"

"Holes? What holes? For what?" asked the salesman.

"Holes for the ears of the ass to stick out of the cap, of course! You don't expect anyone but an ass to pay that price for this stuff!" replied the farmer.



# The wedding in the forest

“I’ve news! Hot news!” Maruti the Monkey jumped from tree to tree, shrieking at the top of his voice. The forest echoed with Maruti’s voice, and soon the residents of the forest awoke from their afternoon siesta. Leo the Lion yawned. “What’s the noise? Who woke me up?” Sheru the Tiger said, “Oh, it’s Maruti. He has come with a message from the palace.”

“Maruti, come here!” thundered Leo. “Why are you making so much of noise? You disturbed me in my sleep.”

Maruti bowed and said, “O! King Leo, I’ve good news from the palace. Our friend Princess Parvati is getting married. The palace is preparing for the wedding.”

“How nice!” said Queen Lalli the Lioness. “I remember the day she was born. Now she’s getting married!”

King Leo smiled. Usually he never smiled or laughed. He was always angry, growling away. All the animals in the forest were afraid of him. But he liked Princess Parvati very much as she was a good friend of all the animals and birds of the forest. Long, long ago, her father King Himalay was very fond of hunting. Twice a year, he used to visit the forest with his friends and hunt down the animals. His palace was full of the heads of lions, cheetahs, tigers, deers, and bears. Many people had advised him not to hunt and kill animals, but he never listened.

“Princess Parvati is a good friend of we people. All of us must join together



and give her a good gift,” said Queen Lalli. “Call all the residents of our forest for a meeting tonight, and we’ll decide on the gift,” ordered King Leo. Later, all the animals were sitting around the throne of King Leo. “Welcome, my friends! Our Maruti has brought good news from the palace. Our dear friend Princess Parvati is getting married to Prince Easwar of our neighbouring country. We should decide on a good gift for the bride.”

“Yes, yes,” came the chorus from many animals. King Leo watched Ganpath the Elephant, who remained silent. “It seems Ganpath has different views. What is it, my friend?”

Ganpath moved forward and raised his trunk in salutation. “King Leo, I’m happy for the Princess. But we should not forget the feast given in her honour when she was born.”

“Yes, I do remember that very well. In fact, Queen Lalli and myself were discussing only this morning,” said King Leo, a bit impatiently.

“Then how can you forget how my relatives were killed for their tusks to be given away as gifts to the guests?” said Ganpath, wiping his tears. Sheru added: “What about my wife Sheelu who was killed for her skin?”

Many of the older animals soon recalled their dead friends and relatives. “Oh, no! How can we forget that? I lost my young daughter who was just two days old when one of the guests took her away to his country!” Queen Lalli said, as she wiped her eyes, too.

King Leo said: “I haven’t forgotten anything. But the princess, when she was six years old, changed all that. She made her father promise that he would never hunt animals and birds. Till today, the people from the palace have never bothered us.”

Bhalu the Bear, the wisest of them all, said: “I agree

with you, King Leo, but we should not forget that this is a wedding. There will be a feast. So many chickens, fish, cows, pigs, deer and lambs will be killed.”

“Oh, there will be several hunting parties and they will kill us, rabbits, doves, and foxes for fun,” Daisy the Deer said timidly. Her body was trembling with fear. A sense of despair and sadness prevailed in the forest.

“O, mighty king! It’s your duty to protect us,” said Kanna the Camel. Once upon a time, she had lived in the desert. When she came on a visit, she liked the forest very much and decided to live here.

At last King Leo said: “It’s getting late now and all of us have to rest. Maruti, you must go and tell Princess Parvati about our problems. From now on you’ll be our official messenger.”

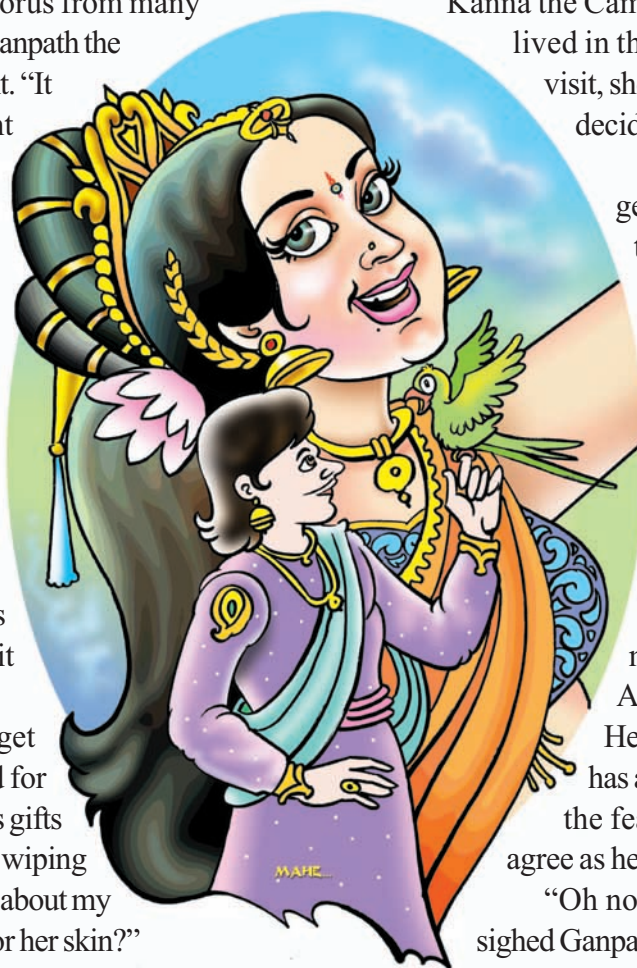
Maruti bowed low and said: “Yes, your majesty.”

The next day, after Maruti had come back from the palace, the animals once again assembled for a meeting. “Your majesty, today I’ve bad news!” All heads turned towards Maruti. He said, “The bridegroom’s family has asked for non-vegetarian food at the feast. And King Himalay had to agree as he is the bride’s father.”

“Oh no! Not another feast of death!” sighed Ganpath.

“Can’t Princess Parvati do something to stop these killings?” asked a very sad Queen Lalli. “Princess Parvati tried her best to spare all of us, her dear friends of the forest. But the bridegroom’s family appears adamant. The poor Princess is crying and pleading with her father every day. King Himalay is very upset, too. He is holding meetings with his ministers,” explained Maruti.

“I say, Princess Parvati can send a secret message to Prince Easwar. He’ll listen to her if he loves her,” suggested the wise Bhalu the Bear.





“Excellent! I think we’re wiser than the people in the city,” said the King Leo. “Our Parimala the Parrot will take a message, as she can fly fast.” Everyone was very happy, when they went back to their respective homes.

Maruti took Parimala to the palace on the secret mission. Princess Parvati was very happy with the idea. She taught Parimala how to describe the feast to the Prince. She then took Parimala to the roof of the palace, without making any noise. From there Parimala flew direct to Prince Easwar’s palace. He was astonished to see a parrot on his bedside in the morning.

Parimala bowed her head and said: “O, mighty Prince, my salutations to you. I’ve a message from Princess Parvati.” The Prince was very eager to know what the message was about. Parimala said: “Dear Prince, both of us are getting married because we love each other. But many of my innocent friends of the forest will be killed for our wedding feast. It breaks my heart that my friends will suffer on what’ll be my happiest day. If you love me, you must put a stop to this unnecessary killings. Your family, friends, relatives and you can have any dish you like without killing anyone.” After repeating the message,

Parimala took a deep breath. The prince immediately ordered to stop all killing of animals. His father King Aryas also agreed.

Prince Easwar then sent a message to Princess Parvati through Parimala. It said: “Thank you for trusting me to save your friends. I’ve ordered stopping of all killings. To show my love for you to your friends, I want our marriage to be held in the forest itself, so that all of them can attend without any fear.” Parimala flew back to Princess Parvati, and gave her the message.

On the wedding day, the whole forest was decorated with flowers and leaves. Ganpath the Elephant and Kanna the camel were the decorators as they were tall. Maruti the Monkey and his relatives helped transporting things from one place to the other. Bhalu the Bear was the chief cook, and he used honey to make sweets. King Leo and Queen Lalli wore their royal clothes and ordered everybody to make the marriage a grand affair.

All the invitees from other countries remarked: “This is the best wedding we have attended. This wedding in the forest is a great success, thanks to Princess Parvati’s friends.”  
- **Kanthalakshmi Chandramouli**



## The Earth and The Tiffin Box

As Mr. Sen walked into the classroom, there was absolute silence. As usual he greeted the students and told them in a very grim voice: “The Inspector of Schools will be visiting our school in a day or two. He will be asking you questions in geography, like the shape of the Earth. So, go home and revise your lesson well.”

The day for the inspection arrived. Mr. Sen was tense. He entered the class and cleared his throat. Then he asked the students: “I hope everybody has prepared the lesson about the Earth. In case you get nervous and forget the answer, then just think of my tiffin box. Immediately you will remember that it is round.” The students nodded as if they had understood.

Footsteps were heard in the corridor and soon the inspector entered the room, accompanied by the Principal. After greeting the children, the inspector asked one child to stand up. “What’s your name, son?” he asked. “My name is Ram, sir”, answered the boy. “Now Ram, can you tell me, what is the shape of the Earth?” asked the inspector. Ram looked around nervously. Then as he met Mr. Sen’s glance he seemed to regain confidence. Promptly Ram answered: “Round, sir, on Mondays, square on Tuesdays, and cylindrical on the rest of the days.” Everybody started laughing.

Except Mr. Sen who looked crestfallen. When giving the children a clue, he had forgotten to tell them that the shape of the earth was like the tiffin box he carried only on Mondays.



## Orion

The Orion constellation, named after the legendary hunter, is the most recognisable pattern of stars in the night sky. It is a bright and large constellation and can be seen clearly in winter. Orion has a wonderful and distinctive arrangement of stars that brighten the night skies.

The constellation can be identified by a rectangle of four stars enclosing a row of three bright stars. The three stars mark the belt of Orion. Three more fainter stars in a row represent the sword hanging from the belt. The four stars on the outside form the hunter's shoulders and knees. The bright star in the constellation is Rigel that represents Orion's left knee while Betelgeuse represents the right shoulder. Orion is seen standing near the River Eridanus with his two faithful hunting dogs – Canis Major and Canis Minor.

According to Greek mythology, Orion was a giant and a great hunter. Along with his hunting dogs he hunted many celestial animals including Lepus the rabbit, and Taurus the bull. He boasted that no animal could kill him. When Hera, the wife of Zeus, heard this, she sent a scorpion to sting him. The scorpion killed Orion but Zeus felt sorry for Orion and put him up in the sky as a constellation. He also gave the scorpion a place in the sky as the constellation Scorpius but in the opposite direction to Orion. It is interesting to note that when one constellation rises up in the horizon, the other would have set. The two rivals do not see each other even in the sky!

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## Ophthalmoscope

Just like a doctor uses a stethoscope to listen to the sounds made inside your body, an ophthalmoscope is a device used for examining the interior of the eye.

Herman von Helmholtz, a German physicist, invented the ophthalmoscope in 1851. The instrument is used to diagnose diseases in the eye or any damage caused to the eye. It helps in seeing clearly the arteries, veins, and optic nerves at the back of the retina or eyeball.

The ophthalmoscope is of two types – direct and indirect. The direct one is a hand-held device. There is a small lamp powered by batteries in the handle. The light is directed into the eye of the patient by a prism. The image is magnified and can be seen by rotating a series of lenses to get the right focus.

The indirect ophthalmoscope is used to examine the entire retina. The instrument is clamped to the doctor's head. The patient is also given a special lens. The magnifying lens in the instrument and the lens in the patient's eye allow the doctor to look at the retina clearly.







## Opossum

The opossum is a grey furry marsupial about the size of a cat. Marsupials are animals that carry their young on a pouch in their body. An average adult is only 24 to 26 inches inclusive of the tail. They have a white face with four rows of whiskers, a small pink nose, black eyes and black ears.

Opossums have a long hairless tail. This tail is prehensile, which means it can be used to grasp tree branches like a hand.

Opossums are generally found in woodlands, farmlands and areas adjoining water. But they are very adaptable and can survive almost anywhere. They can also be found near landfills. Opossums prefer to use the dens of other animals rather than build their own.

The opossum is an omnivorous animal. It will eat anything it can find – insects, rats, mice, slugs, snails, shrews, and berries. They even eat snakes and they are immune to snake poison.

Though an opossum is a nocturnal animal, it can be seen even during the daytime if their natural habitat has been destroyed.

Opossums are shy creatures preferring to be left alone. When confronted or frightened, they hiss or growl and curl their lips to display small sharp teeth.

Opossums belong to a group of marsupials called didelphids, meaning that the female has two wombs. The female has a gestation period of 12-13 days. Young opossums are extremely tiny and they grow to a triple of their size within a week after birth. They remain in their mother's pouch for about 70 days. They are then carried on their mother's back for a few more days. After that they are on their own.

When an opossum is confronted by danger, they 'play possum'. This is a trick the opossum resorts to as a last resort more out of fear than as an intelligent ruse. They go into a state of shock and pretend to be dead. No amount of poking or prodding will revive it.

Opossum is the lone pouched animal in North America. Certain varieties of opossums are found in South and Central America.



- Compiled by Vidhya Raj



# Why groundhog has a short tail



*Here is a Cherokee Tale. The Cherokees believed that animals were bigger, stronger and more perfect than their counterpart today. They were supposed to mingle with humans and converse with them on equal terms.*

**T**he groundhog felt terribly hungry. Oh! How he wished someone would serve him food in the tunnel that was his home! 'If wishes were horses, fools would ride', he remembered a proverb he had overheard while running close to a shed where men lived. He was not a fool. He knew nobody would serve him food at his tunnel! There was no alternative. He had to fend for himself.

That thought made him uncomfortable. For finding food, he had to leave the safety of the tunnel, run out into the open where roamed predators who looked upon him as their food. He did not want to become food for a predator.

Then he laughed off his fears. He had escaped death, on several occasions. He had enough wits to get out of scrapes.

That thought cheered him. He started running up the slope of the tunnel. At the rim of the tunnel, at the ground level, he paused. He pushed his head till his eyes had a clear view of the scene and looked all around. The coast was clear. That raised his spirits. He came out of the tunnel. Huge trees stood around patches of grass and thickets. The groundhog moved around, foraging for food. He dug out delicious roots and nibbled at them. He gobbled up grasshoppers and crickets and earthworms that lay within reach.

In between, he paused to check if he had not moved too far from his hole. His hole was his lifeline. He wanted to be close to it so that he could run to it if he smelt danger.

He was digging for a root when he heard rushing feet. He lifted his head and looked out. He got the fright of his life. A pack of wolves had formed a ring around him. One of them blocked the path to his hole. "Is this the end of me?" the groundhog feared.

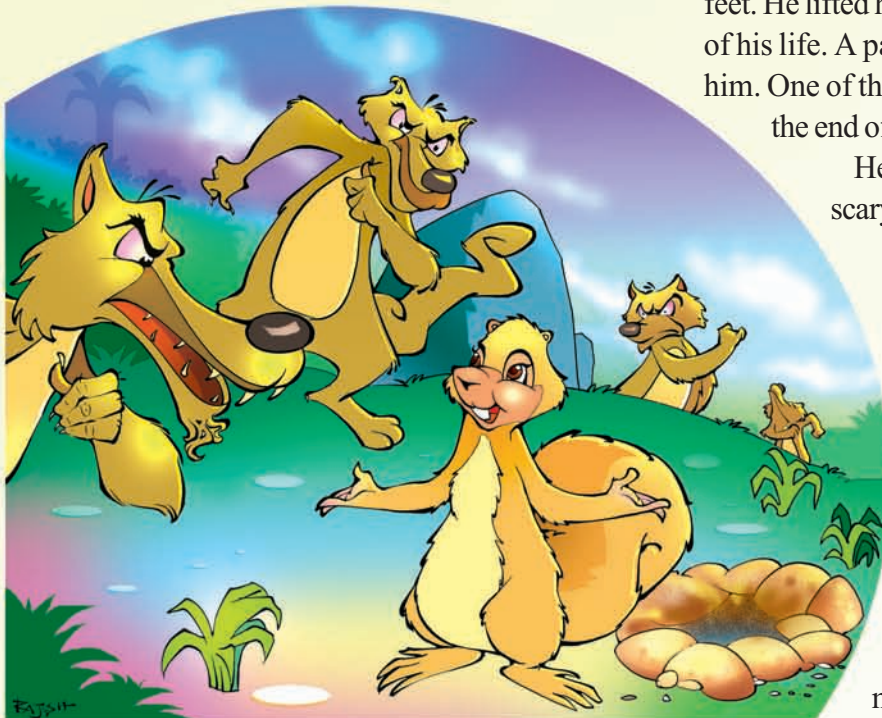
He killed this thought, instantly. Better the scary thought gets killed than he!

"I shall overcome," he muttered to himself, while the seven wolves readied to run him down and tear him to bits.

"Ah, friends," said the groundhog, smiling happily. "Congratulations! You have found a meal."

The wolves were taken aback. Never ever had a prey been so cool and unruffled. They stopped in their path and turned to their leader.

"Thank you," the leader of the pack moved a step forward, saying, "but we





can't wait a moment more. We are terribly hungry."

"Won't you take a few minutes to thank God for his mercy? Is it not fair that you celebrated the occasion before you sat down to dine? I am told it is the done thing among wolves, especially the civilised ones," the groundhog looked into the eyes of the leader of the pack.

"Do you think we are uncivilised?" the leader of the pack rolled his eyes.

"Did I ever say so? I know you will sing in praise of the Lord, dance to the tune merrily before you take your meal," the groundhog grinned.

"But not one of us has a musical voice," the leader of the pack admitted.

"That's no problem. I sing and you dance," the groundhog smiled at the wolves and added, "I shall sing a song for each one of you. I know many tunes. I shall sing the seven of the best songs that I know. Every time I sing a new song, I shall stand with my back to a different tree. You dance, tap your feet merrily, while moving back till I finish the song. Then you will reassemble in front of the next tree to which I shall move. I shall sing and you will dance to the new tune, drawing away from me till I finish the song. We follow this till I render the last song. The seventh song will be in praise of the Lord. Once I have sung all the songs and you have danced to their notes, you can make a meal of me."

The leader of the pack agreed.

The groundhog backed to the nearest tree. He smiled at the leader and said, "This song is in your honour." That brought a big smile on the leader's face.

The groundhog started singing. The wolves danced merrily. They circled the open ground, backed away while the song filled the air. Of course they kept their eyes on the groundhog. They had their suspicion. Just in case he quickly got away while they were at some distance!

But the groundhog stuck to the tree till the song ended.

Then the wolves closed in. The groundhog now moved to another tree. He rested his back on the tree. He cleared his throat and rendered a new song.



This time the wolves were a little less suspicious of the groundhog. Each time a song ended, the groundhog moved to another tree, took his stand and waited till the wolves got ready for the dance. He showed no sign of fear. Nor did he make any attempt to run away. That won him the trust of the wolves.

The sixth song ended. Now it was time for him to move to a new tree. He took just a fraction of a second to locate the entrance to his hole. Ah! If all goes well, I shall be safe in that hole soon," he told himself while he looked out for the next tree to rest his back. He chose the tree with great care.

Then he turned to the pack of wolves. "Only one more song shall I sing. It will be in honour of the Lord," the groundhog told the leader as the wolves gathered around him. He now had his back to a tree that he chose with care.

"And when the song ends, we rush in and eat you up," said the leader.

"I thought that was already agreed upon," the groundhog pouted his lips.

"You are a real sport, groundhog. If we were not so hungry, we would have let you go. But....," he bared his sharp teeth.

"Forget it. We made a deal. A deal is a deal and we should go through it. Once the seven rounds are over, you can make a meal of me," the groundhog whistled a merry tune before asking the leader, "Ready for the seventh song, the last dance?"

"Yes," said the wolves, happily.

The groundhog started singing. The wolves danced merrily moving farther from the groundhog. The music filled the air. It rose and fell, again and again. The notes came faster. The wolves took faster steps. They whirled around, at a dizzying pace. Then the song ended. The groundhog shouted, "I am ready." The wolves took a few seconds to get their steps right. That was the time the groundhog needed. He made a run for his life. He ran as he had never run before. He believed he had set a new speed record. The wolves charged in, but he just managed to get into his hole. He ran in, head first. The tip of his tail was out of the hole. The leader of the pack reached just in time to grab the tip between his teeth. He could have bitten it off, but he still

had hopes of getting the groundhog out. He held to the tail and pulled with all his strength. The groundhog held on to the sides of the tunnel, with his claws. The tug of war continued for some time. Finally the wolf heaved with all his strength. Then the unexpected happened. The tip of the tail that he held came off. The wolf was thrown back. He took a twist and a roll and then hit the ground. He lay dazed, still holding on to the tail.

"The groundhog fooled us," the wolves said.

"We let him fool us," the pack leader growled.

The groundhog ran deeper into his hole. Once he regained his breath, he took time to check his tail. It was shorter, yet it looked better. "Safer too," the groundhog celebrated his escape.

Since then the groundhog has a short tail. **- R.K. Murthi**



## Tailor - a better doctor?

Suresh felt that something was drastically wrong with him. He was hearing some ringing noise in his ears all day long. Further, his face looked unusually red and his eyes were almost popping out.

He was worried, and went to see a doctor, who examined him thoroughly. "You've high blood pressure. Too much stress at the workplace, perhaps!" He was sent back with some medicines.

So, Suresh changed jobs, opting for a job that paid less but wasn't so challenging. However, it was of no use. The symptoms persisted.

He now thought of changing his doctor. This one, more qualified, declared after examining him that his teeth were the cause of his problem. As per his instruction, Suresh had all his teeth pulled out. Still, he did not get any relief. Finally, he consulted a famous specialist. After a week of scans, x-rays, and tests, the verdict came. "Suresh, I'm afraid it's bad news. You've only six months more to live!"

Suresh was now resigned to his fate. He decided that as he was going to die soon, he might as well live it up until his last breath. He sold his house, withdrew all his savings, and signed up for a world tour. Before setting off, he needed some new shirts, and went to his tailor. While taking his measurements, the tailor muttered, "Sleeve 32, collar 16..." "No!" interrupted Suresh, "I've always worn a 15 collar!"

"I can make it whatever size you wish, sir," answered the tailor. "But I must warn you, if you wear a smaller size, your ears will ring, your eyes will bulge, and your face will go red!"





# Newsflash



## Mantras become meaningful

**W**hen priests chant *mantras*, especially when some rites are performed and rituals are followed in homes and other places, the gathering seldom repeats the *slokas* as they do not know the words and verses. They are also ignorant of their meanings and significances. All this is slowly undergoing a change. An organisation in Pune, Jnana Prabodhini, has trained priests who are expected to explain the relevance of each mantra. The organisation has also brought out booklets which help the audience to follow the verses and chant them in chorus with the trained priests. Thus there is a sense of total involvement whether it is a house-warming occasion, naming ceremony, wedding, thread ceremony, or last rites. The change is catching up and even doctors, engineers, and lawyers have started joining the training classes.

## A family of mahouts

**I**magine having ten mahouts in one family! The famous Guruvayur temple in Kerala maintains a stable of nearly 70 elephants. Most of them had come as "offerings" by devotees, who meet the expenses towards their maintenance. Govindan Nair was among the early mahouts in the payroll of the temple. His eldest son became a mahout in 1976. His three other sons, too, became mahouts by and by. When the two daughters got married, their husbands joined the group. An uncle has a son, so too an aunt. They also subsequently became mahouts. In his old age, Govindan Nair has the satisfaction of initiating two grandsons into this unique profession. The Edathala *tarwad* of Trichur, near Guruvayur, thus has ten mahouts. Nine of them are in the service of the temple while one has joined the service of a landlord. Rarely they meet, but when they do so there is no stopping them from narrating elephant stories in general and their own experiences in particular.



# FUN TIMES

Isn't this a lovely scene from a forest. There is more fun in here. Pick up your pencil and find out!



## 1. Colour the picture

Freddie the Frog is having a jolly walk. Add a dash of colour and make his walk more interesting.

1

## 2. Help Linda

Linda the Ladybird is worried. Her sister is trapped inside the tree trunk. Help her find the way to her through the maze. She must avoid the insect in between.





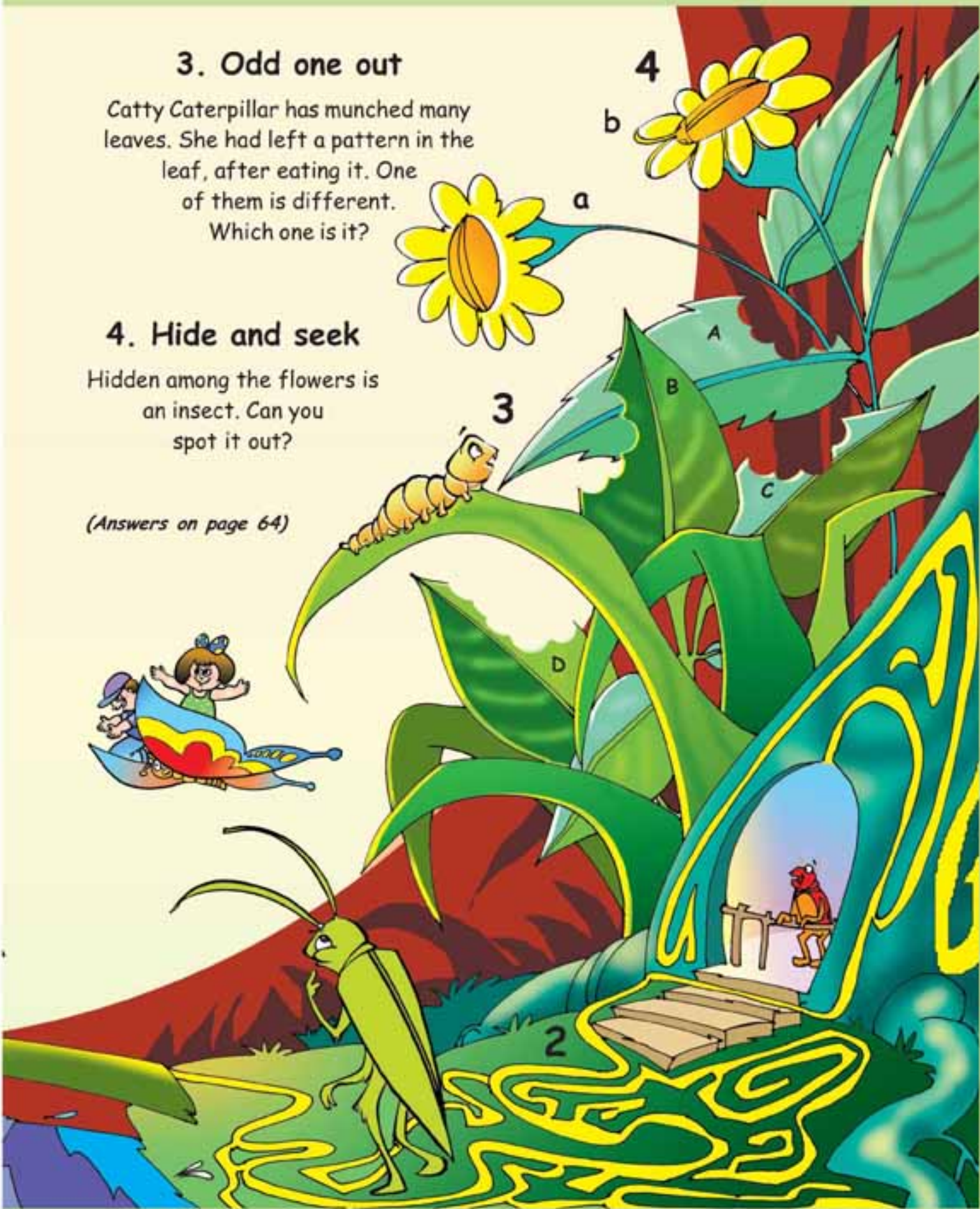
### 3. Odd one out

Catty Caterpillar has munched many leaves. She had left a pattern in the leaf, after eating it. One of them is different. Which one is it?

#### 4. Hide and seek

Hidden among the flowers is an insect. Can you spot it out?

(Answers on page 64)





# Story of Ganesa

## 22. A yaga is saved

**I**ndra, the King of Gods, once captured the horse sent out by King Sagara prior to holding the Aswamedha yaga. The horse was expected to traverse from one kingdom to another without let or hindrance, and the rulers who allowed the horse to pass through their kingdoms would be considered as accepting the suzerainty of Sagara.

Years later, Abhinanda, who was born in the same dynasty as that of Sagara, began a yaga without inviting Indra. He was angry and wanted to disturb the yaga and approached the god of Death, Yama. After pleasing him, Indra requested Yama to take the life of Abhinanda. Yama, who held the control of Kala or Time, and decided how long one should enjoy life, was known as Kalayama.

Now, Kalayama entered the body of Abhinanda while he was presiding over the yagna, and turned into a huge giant. As he rose from the fire and assumed mountainous proportions, the priests who were conducting the yaga ran away from the place. On seeing them fleeing, thousands of people who had gathered to witness the yaga also left the place. The yaga was thus abandoned.

The king's guru, Visishtha, told him that he had, in apprehension of such an eventuality, installed a clay image

of Lord Vighneswara in front of the yaga fireplace. He advised Abhinanda to worship the Lord with turmeric powder. The king meditated on the Lord for a long time. He then heard the primordial sound of 'Om' rising from the image. Soon, the sound produced thousands of rats who surrounded the hideous figure and began biting it all over. The ghostly figure could not tolerate the unexpected attack on it, and soon disappeared.

Now Kalayama threw away the rope in his hand with which he was hoping to take the life of King Abhinanda. The rope fell down with a loud noise. Abhinanda tried to cut it into pieces to take away its power. However, even the pieces acquired the power of the original rope and they began to take away lives indiscriminately. They all ran to the Creator, Lord Brahma, who consoled them by saying, "You cannot escape the rope wielded by Kalayama because Time is in his hands. Lord Vighneswara alone can save you, and so you should worship Vighneswara."

Pleased with their intense worship, Lord Vighneswara appeared before them. The Lord had a more powerful rope in His hands. He threw it at the rope in the hands of Kalayama who now assumed the feosome







figure of Vighnasura. There ensued a fight between Vighneswara and Vighnasura. The Lord aimed his hook at Vighnasura, who fell down when the hook pierced his body.

Kalayama now left the body of Vighnasura and paid his oblations to the Lord. "O Ganesa! My rope is nothing in your presence and your power. In fact, what is Earth, or the sunrise or the sunset in front of you! Even a mountain will be just an atom before your mount, the rat. Please forgive me, O Lord!"

Kalayama then expressed his apologies and said, "O Vighneswara! I still don't know what happened to me. I

was only obeying the orders of Lord Indra."

Vighneswara helped him to rise on his feet and said, "Why should you oblige others? You have your duties set for you, and you have only to follow them."

When Kalayama disappeared from the scene, King Abhinanda and everybody else got up as if they were waking up from a trance. There was a shower of flowers from the skies and the yaga fire came alive once again. They were all praise for Lord Vighneswara. From that day, every ceremony or ritual began with a worship of Lord Vighneswara.

*(To continue)*

## 56<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OFFER

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your overwhelming response to the Anniversary subscription offer. The free gift of five books from the *Jungle Jingles* series for a 2-year subscription ends as of September 30, 2003.

However, since it is the festive season, we offer existing and new subscribers an **exciting festival offer: Annual subscription at Rs.150 only (English edition)!**

The offer extends up to January 31, 2004.

- Publisher





Dear eco friends,

It's festival time, and what does that mean? New clothes, pots of fun and exchanging of gifts. So, this time round let us reuse or recycle (as it is better known) something around the house. This will be our contribution to protecting and preserving the environment. Have fun and keep your world clean and green.

Love

Kopra Katty

## Milk Sachet Pencil Cases

Every morning you see your mother promptly dispose of the milk sachet after pouring out the contents. You never thought that the sachet could be of some use so, you never bothered. But believe me these seemingly useless sachets can be transformed into really smart pencil cases. What's more, it is fairly simple. So, the next time you want to surprise a friend with something really special, this is what you could give him.

### Things you will need-

An empty milk sachet  
(make sure that it has been cleaned and dried well)

A picture cut out from a greeting card

Fevicol

A pair of scissors

Two pieces of velchro

### What to do-

Cut open the sachet and spread it out like a sheet.

Fold it lengthwise to look like what you see in the



picture. Now use fevicol to stick the open side and the bottom. Let dry. Stick the greeting card picture on one side of the case. Fold about one inch of the case inwards around the rim. Stick the folded bit in place using fevicol. Stick a piece of velchro on either side (of the inside) of the case using fevicol.

Use a permanent marker to write or draw anything else that you think will make your case look better and smarter.





Diwali is the festival of lamps. So, this festive season brighten the world around you and spread good cheer.

It is the season for fire crackers, and all you hear is BING, BANG and BOOM. But did you know that the loud noises and fumes produced by the fire crackers can be very harmful to us? In fact, very loud noises can cause permanent deafness. Besides, the smoke and fumes can cause diseases of the respiratory system. The fumes also have hazardous effects on environment. It causes immense atmospheric pollution.

- ▲ All fire crackers that produce noise which is more than 125 decibels have been banned by law. So, when buying crackers keep the more "noisy ones" out of your list.
- ▲ Remember that some areas like hospitals are declared as silent zones. Do not burst crackers in and around these places.
- ▲ Hold the lighted crackers away from your body.
- ▲ Wear cotton clothes when you want to burn crackers.
- ▲ Ask your parents or some adult person to be around.
- ▲ Don't forget to guard your feet. Always wear sandals or slippers.
- ▲ Pets like dogs are afraid of the loud noises produced by the crackers. So, make sure they're not around.
- ▲ After you have finished bursting all your crackers make sure that the waste is swept into a garbage bag and got rid of. If you leave things lying around, it can be the cause of accidents and pollution.



ough

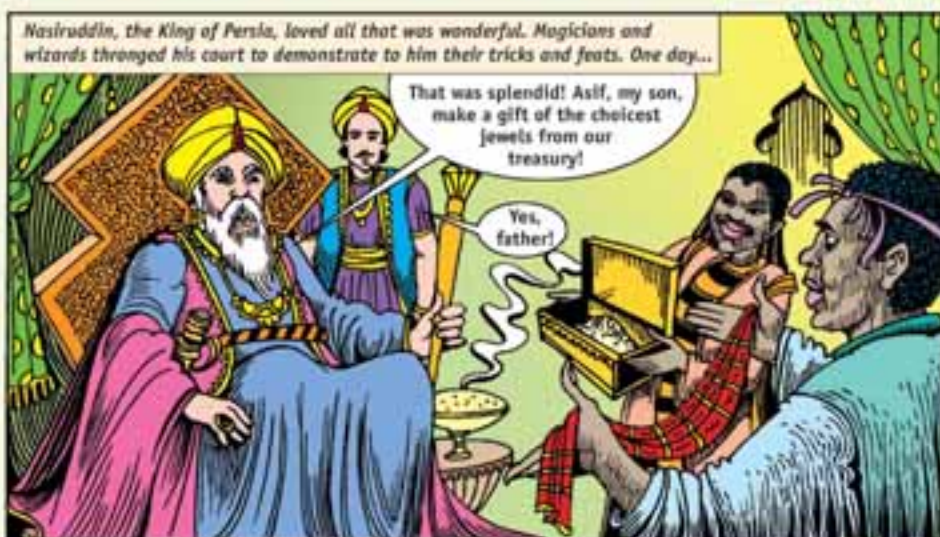
Did you know that the combination 'ough' can be pronounced in nine different ways? The following sentence contains them all - "A rough-coated, dough-faced, thoughtful ploughman strode through the streets of Scarborough; after falling into a slough, he coughed and hiccoughed."



# The Arabian Nights : The Flying Horse



Nasiruddin, the King of Persia, loved all that was wonderful. Magicians and wizards thronged his court to demonstrate to him their tricks and feats. One day...



Next, a hideous looking man came to the palace.



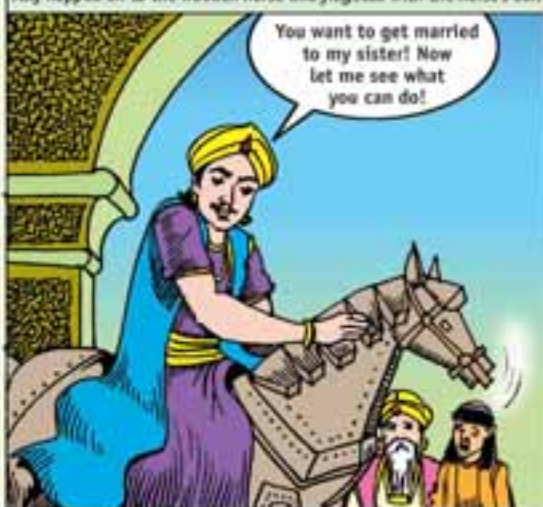
After some more display, Iqbal returned to the court.



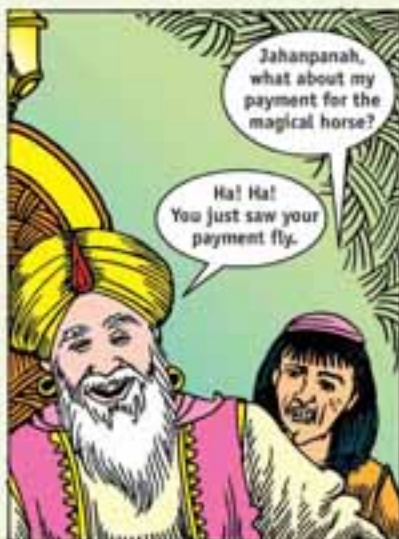


# The Arabian Nights : The Flying Horse

Asif hopped on to the wooden horse and fidgeted with the horse's ear.



The king and Iqbal watched on as the wooden horse flew into the sky with Asif.



Meanwhile, the magic horse flew over unknown mountains and lands, under the camouflage of clouds.



At nightfall Asif passed over a place much like his kingdom.





# The Arabian Nights : The Flying Horse

Asif pondered the situation.



He turned the right ear of the horse away from him.



The horse at once descended on the roof of a huge castle.



There, he found a stairway leading to the castle's inner chambers.



He went down the steps and reached a wide hall. He found soldiers fast asleep there. He quietly passed them by.



In the corridor beyond that, he found women soldiers fast asleep.



At the end of the corridor was a magnificent room where a beautiful woman was sleeping on an ivory cot.



Asif went near the cot and looked at the face closely.

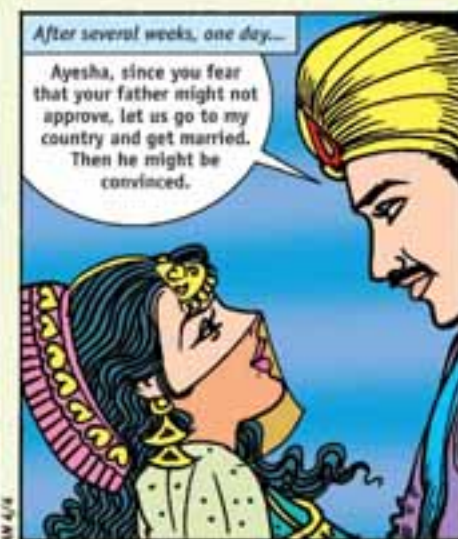
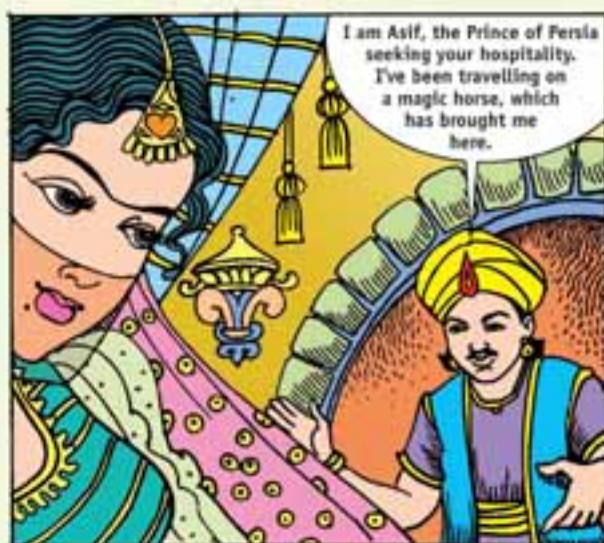


The woman opened her eyes and looked amazed.

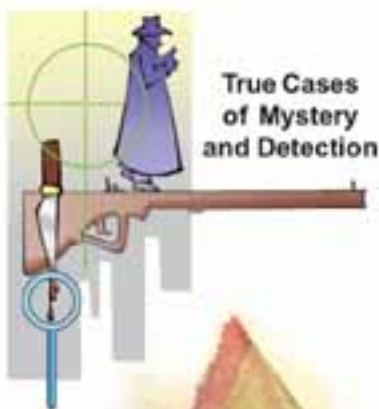




## The Arabian Nights : The Flying Horse







# Vanished without trace!

Alas, he had but taken half a dozen steps when all of a sudden he clean vanished into thin air. The four pairs of eyes just looked on in utter disbelief. Williamson rushed to the spot where the farmer was last seen. There was nothing unusual. There were no ditches into which anybody could have accidentally fallen. Nor were there any trees and bushes nearby where one could go and hide. Jagat Murari seemed to have unwittingly walked off the face of this earth.

Police and detective agencies were pressed into service at once. They combed the entire field and the woods not far away, but found nothing. The government even asked some scientists to investigate the matter. But they fared no better and the farmer remained mysteriously missing. Well, this was not a solitary happening.

It so happened that James Burne Worson, a resident of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, was an ordinary shoemaker. But he constantly boasted his physical strength and stamina. One day, in 1873 his friends challenged him to run across a certain stretch and back. The proud man accepted the wager and set off at once. He ran at a steady pace down the dusty lane followed by his three companions in a horse-drawn cart. They watched him very closely indeed for any sign of fatigue that might prompt him to give up. But determined the shoemaker was and he easily covered several miles. All of a sudden, he stumbled, gave out a cry, and simply vanished as his three friends looked on bewildered and awe-struck.

The good old shoemaker was a simple man and did not know any magic or tricks. Then how could he just melt away into nothingness?

In September 1880, another farmer, David Lang by name, was walking across the field to get his mules ready for the day's work. He waved at his two neighbours who

**H**ow would you feel when a friend you were talking to suddenly vanishes in front of your very eyes? Perhaps you would take it to be mere hallucination or some magical trick. "It's only a game of hide and seek and he'll soon appear again," you would reassure yourself and wait for him. But to your amazement, you gradually realise that something is indeed wrong. For, your dear friend has really disappeared, never to be seen again.

Where did he go? Was he kidnapped by some strange invisible entity? This is what happened in Mauritius, a little more than two decades ago. There lived a well-to-do farmer called Jagat Murari. One day, as he was setting out for his fields, his neighbour Judge Williamson greeted him, "Hello, friend, why don't you drop in for a cup of tea?" The farmer readily accepted the invitation and proceeded to the house, next door, watched by his wife and two children.



were passing by, and his wife too looked on as he approached the barn at the far end. Then, surprisingly, before the startled eyes of his wife and the two men, he disappeared never to be seen again.

Benjamin Bathurst, a British diplomat, was getting ready to board a coach outside an inn near Berlin on 29 November, 1809. He just went round to look at the horses and then, believe it or not, just vanished. In spite of all efforts of the best detectives of the land, no trace of the missing man was ever found.

Sometime in 1974, it is said that even pigs, sheep and heifers would disappear from several farmhouses in Manchester, England, for no apparent reason whatever. In 1900, three lighthouse keepers mysteriously vanished from Eilean Mor, off the coast of Scotland. In 1937, Amelia Earhart, the first woman to have flown across the Atlantic solo and in record time, chalked an ambitious and daring plan to fly round the world. She took off this time accompanied by Fred Noonan, an experienced navigator. But as the plane was heading towards Howland Island it disappeared along with its occupants leaving behind no trace.

In 1930, trapper Joe Labelle stumbled upon a small village by a lake in Canada. Usually, this hamlet of around 1,200 inhabitants was always bubbling with life and activities. But that day as Joe Labelle made his way into it, no longer did he hear the welcome barking of the friendly sledge dogs; instead he was greeted by an eerie silence.

The little shabby dwellings, otherwise very garrulous, seemed to have become dumb, and not a wisp of smoke drifted from their chimneys. Boats and kayaks, canoes of the Eskimos, rested on the shore. Leaning on the doorways were the rifles of the men-folk. Usually, no Eskimo when he travels, ever leaves behind his rifle. In the huts were seen pots of mouldy, half-cooked meals over fires long extinguished. On the bench lay a half-mended apparel with a pair of needles beside it.

Joe Labelle observed that the entire village was devoid of any human beings living or dead. There were no signs of any violence or tussle or squabble. It looked as if at some point of time on a particular day, life in this hamlet had come to a sudden standstill. Then where did all its inhabitants go?

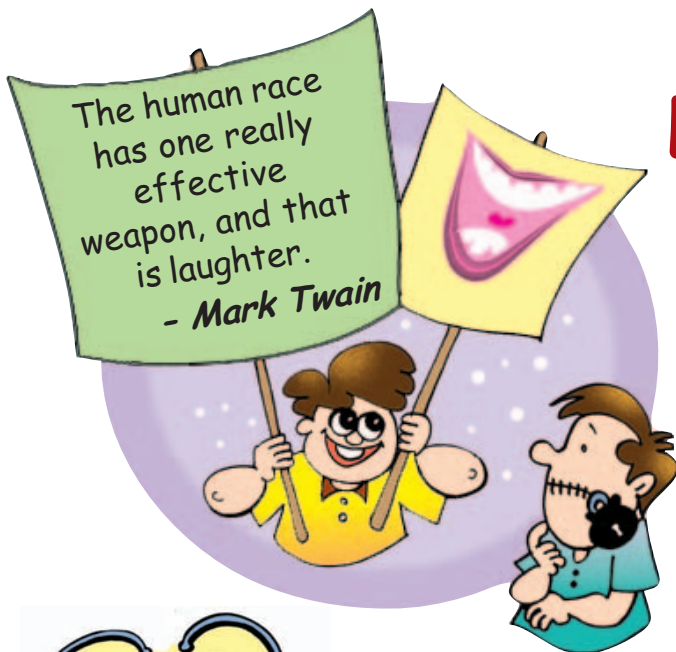


The bewildered trapper wasted no time in wiring police headquarters. A large contingent of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrived and thus began a massive search. All that they found were the missing sledge dogs who were tied to the trees nearby. Under the dense snowdrift they had all been frozen to death.

No trails or footprints leading out of the village were discovered by the detectives. There were no possible means of transport by which such a large number of people could have fled the place. But the officers could not yet believe that about 1,200 human beings could thus suddenly just vanish into thin air. The search widened and covered the entire country and continued for years. But the strange disappearances remained an enigma!

These are some of the bizarre tales of disappearances among many, which have baffled the shrewdest of detectives. How were they possible?





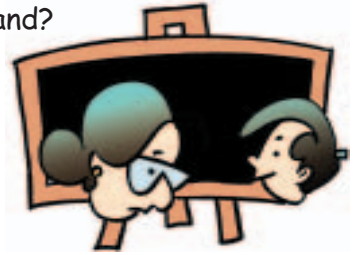
# Laugh till you drop!

**Teacher:** What is an island?

**Madhur:** A piece of land surrounded by water except on one side.

**Teacher:** On one side?

**Madhur:** Yes, on top!



**Veena:** What is a snake's favourite subject?

**Meena:** Hiss - tory.



**Doctor:** I'll examine you for fifty rupees.

**Patient:** If you find it, I'll give you Rs. 20.

**Mother:** Rakesh, why are you wearing your shirt in the bath?

**Rakesh:** Ma, the label says, 'wash and wear'.



One person to another  
(on board a train)

**First person:** Call me a doctor, please!

**Second person:** Why, are you sick?

**First person:** No, I just passed my MBBS.



## Dushtu Dattu



Dattu and his mother are travelling by train. Dattu starts whispering in his mother's ear.



Dattu, how many times have I told you that if you have anything to say, say it aloud!



Okay. Why does the lady sitting opposite us look like an ugly old witch?



# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## Deepavali dazzler

|    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 10 | Y | B | Z | I | E | O | P | S | U | W  |
| 9  | A | J | M | R | Y | I | Z | B | J | O  |
| 8  | K | X | C | H | I | K | N | P | X | A  |
| 7  | N | D | H | M | Q | V | Y | Z | E | N  |
| 6  | C | L | O | R | B | F | M | S | A | U  |
| 5  | L | S | T | P | G | O | V | Y | D | H  |
| 4  | Q | U | C | H | L | T | U | C | L | M  |
| 3  | T | W | D | I | P | X | B | I | K | S  |
| 2  | V | F | V | K | R | Z | E | G | D | N  |
| 1  | L | E | G | W | J | Q | W | A | F | J  |
|    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

*It's the festival of lights and celebrations. Here's a puzzle for you to solve and enjoy. All you need to do is pick the diyas to solve this riddle. Look at each pair of numbers given below and use it to find the respective diya. (The number across comes first.) Then write the letter from that diya in the correct space to spell out the message.*

*(Answers on page 64)*

**Have fun!**

2,3 6,9 10,3 4,8

1,10 3,6 7,4 9,6

4,8 9,6 4,5 4,5 1,10

9,2 5,10 5,10 4,5 9,6 6,6 9,6 1,1 6,9

- By Vidhya Raj



★ **What causes dogs to pant?**

— *Mayuri Hegde, Mangalore.*

All living beings are subjected to a chemical process called metabolism, which creates excess heat in the body. Human beings get rid of this heat by sweating, through glands and pores in their skin. Moisture comes out through these pores and evaporates, the skin thus gets cooled. Dogs have very few pores and sweat glands. So, they put out their tongues and the heat collected on the tongues evaporates.

★ **Erasers are made of rubber. Have other materials ever been used for erasers?**

— *Savitaben Pande, Baroda.*

Erasers used on paper have always been made of rubber. It was by sheer accident that rubber came to be used for erasers. Sometime in the 1750s, a British merchant imported crude rubber from South America. Bits and pieces were thrown away as useless. They were picked up by the merchant's children who began playing with them. Their friend, a boy called Joseph Priestly, took a piece home and when he put it on paper, his scribbles in pencil were easily erased!

★ **How is it possible to decide the age of a tree?**

— *Ramamurthy Venkatesh, Madurai.*

If you were to look at the cross-section of a tree, you can see a number of dark circles in the wood. The circles get smaller in size towards the centre. The older the tree, there are more circle formations. Inside the trunk, there is a ring of cells.



As the tree grows, the number of cells increases. And trees grow faster during spring and summer than in autumn and winter. The cells produced in spring and summer appear as light coloured rings.

In the colder months, when there is a slower growth, the wood hardens and the rings become darker. It is the dark rings that indicate the growth in one year. By counting the number of dark rings, you can decide how old the tree is.

★ **Please explain the working of a vacuum cleaner.**

— *Satish Aggarwal, Kolkata.*

The device called vacuum cleaner has an electric motor inside. When the gadget is switched on, the motor rotates a fan which pushes out air inside the vacuum cleaner. Naturally, the air in the room where the vacuum cleaner is used moves into the device to fill the vacuum.

That air takes along with it all the dirt and dust in the room. These are collected in a disposable bag inside the gadget and the room gets a cleaner appearance.

**ALL THE ANSWERS**

**PUZZLE DAZZLE**

**Deepavali dazzler**

Wish you a  
Happy  
Deepavali



**3. Odd one out**

D is the odd one out.

**4. Hide and seek**

The insect is hidden in flower "b".



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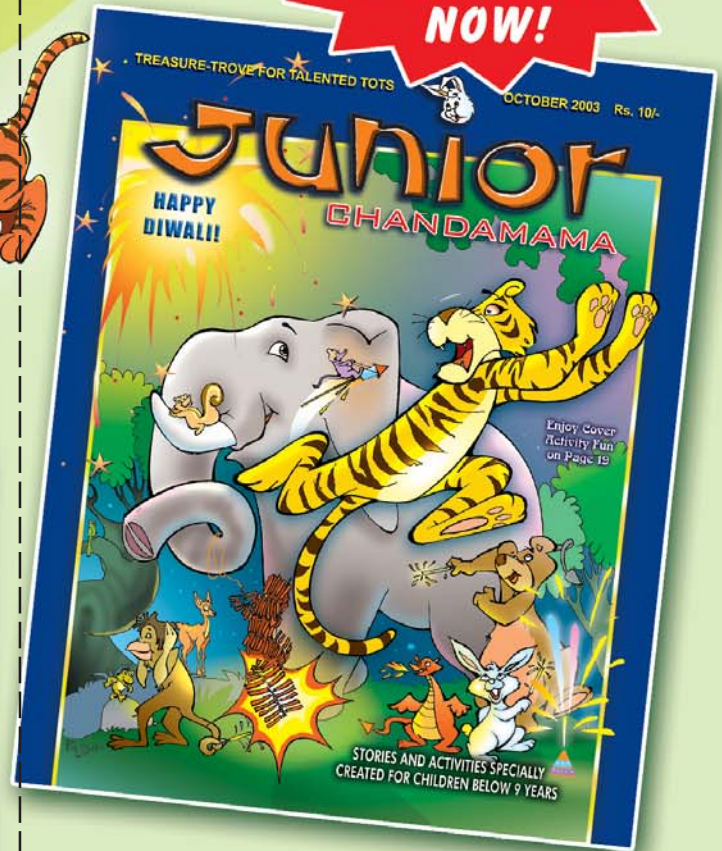
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**PAGE AFTER PAGE WILL KINDLE  
YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION  
ISSUE AFTER ISSUE, MONTH AFTER MONTH**





*Click  
a caption*

## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

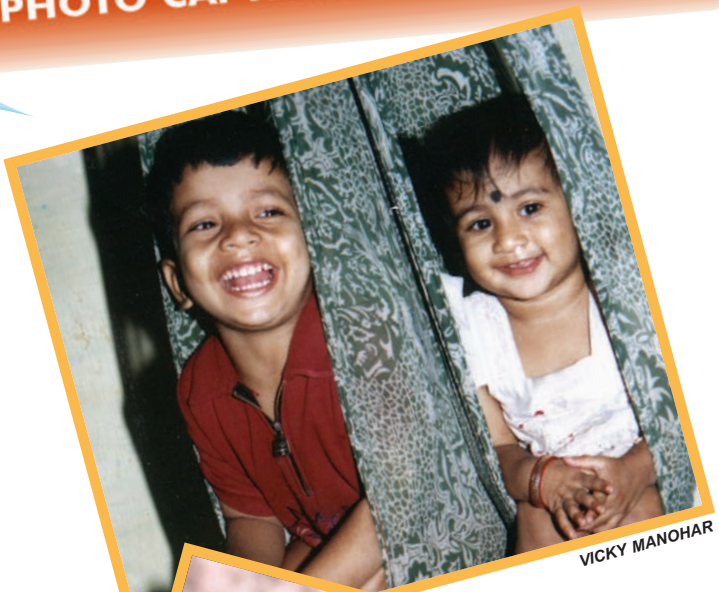
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VICKY MANOHAR



SOURAA

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